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THE

CHRISTIAN

IN

Compleat Armour,

OR, A

TREATISE

OF THE

Saints War against the Devil, wherein a Discovery is made of that grand enemy of God and his People, in his Policies, Power, Seat of his Empire, Wickedneſſe, and chief design he hath against the Saints.

A

Magazin open'd

FROM

Whence the Christian is furniſhed with Spiritual Armes for the battel, help't on with Armour, and taught the uſe of his Weapon, together with the happy iſſue of the whole Warre.

The third and laſt Part.

By *William Gurnall*, M.A. of *Emanuel* Colledge, now Paſtor of the Church of Chriſt, in *Lavenham* in *Suffolk*.

LONDON, Printed for *Ralph Smith*, at the Bible in *Cornhil*, near the *Royal Exchange*. 1662.

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By William Gurnall, M.A. of Emanuel Colledge, now Pastor of the Church of Christ, in Lavenham in Suffolk.

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE,
And truly Religious, the Lady,

Mary Vere,

Baroness of

TILBURY,

And my much honoured Lady.

Madam,

SOME have thought it better to define *Man* from *Religion* his chief End, than from *Reason* his principal Faculty; supposing that by it he may most exactly be distinguish't from other *Animals*, that are all utterly uncapable of Religion, but have some of them a sagacity that is something like Mans discoursive Faculty. Whatever there is in this nice Notion, sure I am, that Mans chief Prerogative and Dignity which he hath to glory of, is this, That he is the only Creature in the whole visible World made to worship and enjoy his

Maker. *All the Creatures are ſervants*, Pſal.119.91. But Man only is a Prieſt to God; they obey their Creator, he only worſhips him. How then comes it to paſs, that true Piety and Religion ſhould be thought a diminution to the honour of any? yet to our amazement we ſee, the readieſt way a man can take to be made a mock and laughing ſtock, is with *David*, to dance zealouſly before the Ark. The *Temple* of *Vertue* led the *Heathen* to the other of *Honour*; but Piety and Godlineſs brings the *Chriſtian* to diſgrace and ſcorn. No ſooner does any dare to own Religion in the power of it, but Fanatique is writ on his back, and a Fools Cap is ſet upon his head; which makes many turn *Nicodemites* in this ſcornful Age, and carry their Religion in a dark Lanthorn, like thoſe in *Salvians* time, *Ne viles haberentur*; leſt they ſhould be counted baſe and vile for their pains. We have had I confeſs too many in our late degenerate dayes (Men born, as one ſaith, to do Religion a miſchief) who by profeſſing high, and living low, in ſordid practiſes, have given Religion ſuch a wound in its reputation, as is not like to be cured while they are above ground, who have thus ſcandalized both it, and the Profeſſours of it. It is the Worlds cuſtom to dreſs up the faithful ſervants of Chriſt in the broken Profeſſors Cloaths, and to draw their picture with the Hypocrites ill-favour'd face, that they all may be thought to be alike, a company who would cheat the World in a religious habit; ſo that he who means now to be religious, muſt be content to be thought a counterfeit by others. But *Madam*, you are not (bleſſed be God) to begin now to caſt up what it will coſt to build for Heaven; you have not amidſt theſe ſcandals been (as the manner of ſome is) offended with Religion for the faults of thoſe that have pretended to it; neither have you in this ſcandalizing Age laid a ſtone

of

of offence before others, but admirably vindicated the honour of Religion (which others have proſtituted) by the amiable uniformity of your Piety, Benificence, Charity, Humility; yea, all thoſe graces which have the greateſt advantage to bring Religion again into credit among us. The Floods of temptation which have carried away the work of many ſandy Builders in our dayes, into the Sea of Errour and Irreligion, have not been able to ſhake the Truth out of your Judgment, nor the practice of Piety out of your Converſation; ſo ſtrongly founded is your building on a judicious knowledge of the Truth, and cloſe pinned together by a ſincere love of what you know. *Madam*, This, had I nothing elſe, were enough to make me ambitious of having a name ſo honourable to patronize my weak labours; yet ſhould I not have preſumed, had not the many Favours, received from your Noble Hand, obliged me to attempt ſome way of expreſſing my Gratitude; and this I hope will not be thought the worſe, becauſe it is ſo publick; your munificent Nobleneſs hath been ſuch, that I cannot call in too many Witneſſes to the acknowledgement of my Obligations.

As for this *Treatiſe* which I humbly preſent to your Honours hands, in every Page of it you will find enough to exerciſe your Candour towards the unworthy Author: But the Subjects treated of, are ſuch, as I am ſure will reliſh well on your ſpiritual palate. I lead not your *Honour* into the duſty road of Controverſies, which hath made Chriſtians ſo unſociable, and keep aloof one from another, though travelling all to the ſame Heaven: But into the green paths of practical Divinity, where all ſincere ſouls can agree to walk together. They all unite in the ultimate *object* of their *hope*; *viz.* Heaven and Salvation: Not the World in Hand, but Heaven in hope

hope brings them in their joy. The *holy Scriptures* is their *Libellus in Angulo* (as once a devout ſoul for himſelf ſaid) Never is the ſincere Chriſtian more ſolaced, than when he can get out of the Worlds noiſe, to ſpend a little time in a Corner in reading or meditating on this Book of Books. And they have all one haunt, where they ſeldom fail to meet one another daily, though as to their bodily preſence they be ſcattered over the face of the whole Earth, and that is *Prayer*. Theſe, *Madam*, are the three moſt general Subjects diſcourſed on in this Treatiſe. I confeſs I choſe in them a Bow too ſtrong for my weak Arm to draw; but the Mark which I level'd at in handling, and now in publiſhing them, I hope is right. May any thing in theſe Papers encreaſe the rejoycing of your hope, make you more mighty in the Scriptures, and blow up the holy fire that already burns on the Altar of your devout ſoul, or any other of the faithful; I ſhall then have my option, and bleſs God for it. I ſhall no further oppreſs your Honours patience: The good Lord yet lengthen out your dayes, ſtrengthen your faith, and multiply your graces, that at laſt you may dye like the *Phœnix*, amidſt their ſweet odours; and cloſe your eyes in peace, with full aſſurance to open them again at the Morning of the Reſurrection to ſee your Redeemer with joy unſpeakable, and endleſs. So prayeth,

Madam,

Auguſt 28. 1661.

Your moſt humble ſervant,

WILLIAM GURNALL.

THE

THE CHRISTIAN IN Compleat Armour.

Part. 3.

EPHES. 6. 17.

And take the Helmet of Salvation.

THese words present us with another Piece in the Christians *Panoply*. A *Helmet* to cover his head in the day of battel. It makes the fifth in the *Apostles* order. And which is observable, This with most of the Pieces in this Magazin are *Defensive Arms*, and all to defend the Christian from sin, none to secure him from suffering.

First, they are most defensive Arms. Indeed there is but one of all the Pieces in the whole *Panoply for offence*, i. e. *The Sword*. It may be to give us this hint, That this spiritual Warre of the Christian lies chiefly on the defence, and therefore requires Arms most of this kind to wage it. God hath deposited a rich treasure of grace in every Saints heart; at this is the Divels great spight, to

plunder him of which, and with it of his happineſſe, he commenceth a bloody warre againſt him: So that the Chriſtian overcomes his enemy, when himſelf is not overcome by him. He wins the day when he doth not loſe his grace; his work being rather to keep what is his own, than to get what is his enemies. And truly this one thing well heeded, that the Saints war lies chiefly on the defence, would be of ſingular uſe to direct the Chriſtian how to manage his Combates both with Satan, and alſo with his inſtruments. *Firſt*, with Satan. Look Chriſtian, thou ſtandſt always in a defenſive poſture, with thy armour on, as a ſouldier upon thy Works ready to defend the Caſtle of thy ſoul which God hath ſet thee to keep, and valiantly to repel Satans aſſaults when ever he makes his approach. But be not perſwaded out of the Line of thy place and calling that God hath drawn about thee. No, not under the ſpecious pretence of zeal, and hope to get the greater victory by falling into the enemies Quarters. Let Satan be the Aſſaylant, and come if he will to tempt thee; but go not thou in a bravado to tempt him to do it. It is juſt he ſhould be foyled, that ſeeks his own danger. This got *Peter* his fall in the High Prieſts Hall, who was left therefore cowardly to deny his Maſter, that he might learn humbly to deny himſelf ever after. *Secondly*, with Satans Inſtruments. May be they revile & reproach thee. Remember now thy part lies on the defence. Give not railing for railing, reproach for reproach. The Goſpel allows thee no liberty to uſe their weapons, and return them *quid* pro *quo*, 1 Pet. 3.8,9. *Be pitiful, be courteous, not rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwiſe bleſſing.* Thou haſt here a Girdle and Breſtplate to defend thee from their bullets; the comfort of thy own ſincerity and holy walking with which thou mayeſt wipe off the dirt thrown upon thy own face, but no weapon for ſelf-revenge. A ſhield is put into thy hand, which thou mayeſt lift up to quench their fiery darts, but no darts of bitter words to retort upon them. Thou art ſhod with peace that thou mayeſt walk ſafely upon the injuries they do thee, without any prick or pain to thy ſpirit, but not with pride to trample upon the perſons that wrong thee.

Secondly, As moſt of the Pieces are defenſive, ſo all of them to defend from ſin, none to ſecure the Chriſtian from ſuffering. They are to defend him in ſuffering, not priviledge him from it. He muſt prepare the more for ſuffering, becauſe he is ſo well furniſht with

Armour

Armour to bear it. Armour is not given for men to wear by the fire-side at Home, but in the Field. How shall the Maker be praised, if the Mettal of his Arms be not known? And where shall it be put to the proof, but amidst Swords and Bullets? He that desires to live all his dayes in an *Isle* of *Providence*, where the whole year is Summer, will never make a good Christian. Resolve for hardship, or lay down thine Arms. Here is the true Reason why so few come at the Beat of Christs Drum to his Standard; and so many of those few that have lifted themselves by an external profession under him, do within awhile drop away, and leave his Colours; it is suffering work they are sick of. Most men are more tender of their skin, than conscience; and had rather the Gospel had provided Armour to defend their Bodies from death and danger, then their souls from sin and Satan.

But I come to the words, *And take the Helmet of Salvation:* In which we may observe,

1. The Copulative that clasps this to the former piece, [*And*] 1.
2. The piece of Armour it self, *The Helmet of Salvation.* 2.

CHAP. I.

Wherein the Concatenation of Graces, in their Birth, Growth, and Decay is set forth.

First, THE Copulative [*And*] *And take,* That is, with the shield of Faith, and all the other pieces of Armour here set down, take this also into the Field with you. See here how every grace is lovingly coupled to its Fellow; and all at last, though many pieces make but one suit; though many links, yet make but one Chain. The Note which this points at, is, The Concatenation of Graces. 1.

Note. The sanctifying saving graces of Gods Spirit, are link't inseparably together; there is a connexion of them one to the other; and that in their Birth, Growth, and Decay.

SECT. I.

1. *First*, IN their Birth. Where one sanctifying grace is, the rest are all to be found in its company. It is not so in common gifts and graces; these are parcel'd out, like the gifts *Abraham* bestowed on the Children he had by his *Concubines*, Gen. 25.6. One hath this gift, another hath that, none hath all. He that hath a gift of knowledge, may want a gift of utterance, and so of the rest: But sanctifying graces are like the inheritance he gave to *Isaac*; every true Believer hath them all given him. *He that is in Christ is a new Creature, and behold all things are become new*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. Now the new Creature contains all; as natural corruption is an universal principle of all sin that lowres the whole lump of mans nature; so is sanctifying grace an universal principle that sweetly seasons, and renews the whole man at once, though not wholly. Grace comes (*saith one*) into the soul, as the soul into the body at once. Indeed it growes by steps, but is born at once; the new Creature hath all its parts formed together, though not its degrees: Some one grace may (we confess) be perceived to stir, and so come under the Christians notice before another. He may feel his fear of God putting forth its self in a holy trembling at, and awe upon his spirit at the thought of God, before he sees his faith in the fiduciary recumbency of his soul upon God; yet the one grace is not in its production before the other. One part of the World hath been discovered to us long after the other; yet all the World was made together. Now this connexion of graces in their Birth, is of double use.

Use 1. First, To relieve the sincere Christian when in doubt of his gracious state, because some one grace which he enquires for, cannot at present be discerned in his soul by him. Possibly it is faith thou hast been looking for, and it is not at any hand to be heard of. Well Christian, do not presently unsaint thy self, till thou hast made further tryal of thy self. Send out therefore thy Spies to search for some other grace, as thy love to Christ; may be

be thou wilt hear ſome tydings of this grace, though the other is not in view. Hath not thy love to God and Chriſt been ſeen by thee in ſuch a temptation, chaſing it away with *Joſephs* Anſwer to his wanton *Miſtris*, *How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* Yea, mayſt thou not ſee it all the day long either in thy ſincere care to pleaſe him, or hearty ſorrow when thou haſt done any thing that grieves him? in which two veins runs the life-blood of a ſouls love to Chriſt. Now know to thy comfort, That thy love can tell thee news of thy faith. As Chriſt ſaid in another caſe, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen my Father*, John 14.9. ſo ſay I to thee, Thou that haſt ſeen thy love to Chriſt, haſt ſeen thy faith in the face of thy love.

But may be, thy love to Chriſt is alſo lodg'd in a cloud. Well, then ſee whether thou canſt ſpye no Evangelical repentance, loathing thee with the ſight of thy ſins, as alſo infiring thee with revenge againſt them, as thoſe enemies which drew thee into rebellion againſt God; yea, were the bloody weapon with which thou haſt ſo oft wounded the Name, and murthered the Son of God. Behold, the grace thou lookeſt for, ſtands before thee; what is love to God, if zeal againſt ſin as Gods enemy, be not? Did not *Abiſhai* love *David*, when his heart boyled ſo over with rage againſt *Shimei* for curſing *David*, that he could not contain, but breaks out into a paſſion, ſaying, *Why ſhould this dead dog curſe my Lord the King? let me go over I pray thee, and take off his head?* 2 Sam. 16.9. and by thy own acknowledgement, it troubles thee as much to hear thy luſts bark againſt God, and thy will is as good to be the death of them, if God would but ſay his *fiat* to it, as ever *Abiſhai*'s was to ſtrike that Traitors head off his ſhoulders. And yet art thou in doubt whether thou loveſt God or no? Truly, then thou canſt not ſee fire for flame, love for zeal. Thus, as by taking hold of one Link, you may draw up the reſt of the Chain that lies under water, ſo by diſcovering one grace, thou mayſt bring all to ſight. *Joſeph* and *Mary* were indeed deceived, when they ſuppoſed their ſon to be in the company of their kindred, *Luke* 2. 44. but ſo canſt thou not here, for this holy kindred of graces go ever together; they are knit as members of the body, one to another; Though you ſee only the face of a man, yet you doubt not but the whole man is there.

2. As it may relieve the ſincere Chriſtian; ſo it will help to uncaſe and put the Hypocrite to ſhame, who makes great pretentions to ſome one grace, when he hates another at the ſame time. A certain note of a falſe heart: he never had any grace, that loves not all graces. *Moſes* would not out of *Egypt* with half his company, *Exodus* 10. Either all muſt go, or none ſhall ſtirre: Neither will the Spirit of God come into a ſoul with half of his ſanctifying graces, but with all his Train. If therefore thy heart be ſet againſt any one grace, it proves thou art a ſtranger to the reſt; and though thou mayſt ſeem a great admirer and lover of one grace, yet the defiance thou ſtandeſt in to others, waſheth off the paint of this fair cover: Love and hatred are of the whole kind; he that loves or hates one Saint as ſuch; doth the ſame by every Saint: So he that cordially cloſeth with one grace, will find every grace endeared to him upon the ſame account; for they are as like one to another, as one beam of the Sun is to another beam.

Sect. II.

2. SAnctifying graces are connext in their growth and decay; encreaſe one grace, and you ſtrengthen all; impair one, and God will be a loſer in all; and the reaſon is, becauſe They are reciprocally helpful each to other. So that when one grace is wounded, the aſſiſtance it ſhould and would (if in temper) contribute to the Chriſtians common ſtock, is either wholly detained, or much leſſened; when love cools, obedience ſlacks, and drives heavily, becauſe it wants the oyle on its wheele that love uſed to drop; obedience faultering, faith weakens apace; how can there be great faith, where is little faithfulneſs? faith we kening, hope preſently wavers; for it is the credit of faiths report, that hope goes on to expect good from God; and hope wavering, patience breaks, and can keep Shop-Windows open no longer, becauſe it Trades with the ſtock hope lends it. In the body you obſerve, there are many members, yet all make but one body; and every member ſo uſeful, that the other are beholden to it: So in the Chriſtian there are many graces, but one new creature; and the eye of knowledge cannot ſay to the hand of faith, I have no need

of

of thee; nor the hand of faith to the foot of obedience; but all are preserved by the mutual care they have of one another: For as ruine to the whole City may enter at a breach in one part of its Wall, and the foul run out through a wound in a particular member of the body; so the ruine of all grace, may, yea must needs follow on the ruine of any one. There is indeed a stronger bond of necessity between graces of our souls, than there is between the members of our body. 'Tis possible, yea ordinary for some member to be cut off from the body, without the death of the whole, because all the members of the body are not vital parts. But every grace is a vital part in the new creature, and so essential to its very being, that its absence cannot be supplyed *per vicarium*. In the body, one eye can make a shift to do the Office of its fellow which is put out; and one hand do the others work that is cut off, though may be not so exactly; but faith cannot do the Office of love, nor love the work of obedience; The lack of one wheele, spoyles the motion of the whole Clock: And if one grace should be wanting, the end would not be attained for which this rare piece of workmanship is set up in the Saints heart.

Let it learn thee (Christian) this wisdom, whenever thou findest any grace weakned, either through thy negligence not tending it, or Satans temptations wounding it, speedily to endeavor the recovery of it: Because thou dost not only lose the comfort, which the exercise of this one grace might bring, but thou weakenest all the other. 1. *Inference.*

Is he a bad Husband, who hazards the fall of his house, by suffering a hole or two in the roof go unmended? what then art thou that putteſt thy whole gracious state in danger, by neglecting a timely repair of the breach made in any one of thy graces?

And so when thou art tempted to any sin, look not on it as a single sin, but as having all other sins in its belly. Consider what thou dost, before thou gratifiest Satan in any one motion; for by one sin thou strengthenest the whole body of sin; give to one sin, and that will send more beggars to your door, and they will come with a stronger plea than the former; another, why mayst thou not do this for them, as well as that? thy best way is to keep the door shut to all; lest, while thou intendest to entertain only one,

all

all croud in with it: But if it were possible that thou couldst break this connexion of sin, so as to take off one link that pleaseth thee best, and not draw the whole chain after thee by committing this, yet know there is a connexion of guilt also, *James* 2. 10. *Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* As he that administreth to the estate of one deceased, though it be never so little that he takes into his hands, becomes liable to pay all his debts, and brings all his Creditors upon him: So by tampering but with one sin, and that a little one, thou bringst the whole Law upon thy back, which will arrest thee upon Gods suit, as a trespasser and transgressour of all its commands. A man cannot stab any part of the face, but he will disfigure the whole countenance, and wrong the whole man. Thus the Law is copulative; an affront done to one, redounds to the dishonour of all, and so is resented by God the Law-giver, whose authority is equally in all.

2. This may comfort those who trouble themselves with the thoughts of future changes which may befall them, and so alter the Scene of their affairs, as to call them to act a part they never much thought upon; and what shall they do then, say they? Now (blessed be God) they make a shift to serve God in their place; but what if streights come? Poverty, Sickness, or other Crosses, make a breach in their bank? how alas, shall they then behave themselves? where is their faith, patience, contentation, and other suffering graces, that should enable them to walk on these waves without sinking? They fear alas, little of these suffering graces is in their hands for such a time: Well Christian, for thy encouragement, know, If the graces of thy present condition, (those I mean which God calls thee to exercise now in thy prosperous state) be lively, and quit themselves well, Thou mayst comfortably hope the other suffering graces which now stand unseen behind the Curtain, will do the same, when God changeth the scene of thy Affairs, and calls them upon the stage to act their part. The more humble thou art now with thy abundance, the more patient thou wilt certainly shew thy self in thy penury; so much as thy heart is now above the Worlds enjoyments, even so much thou wilt then be above the troubles and sorrowes of it. Trees they say, grow proportionably under-ground, to what they do above-ground: And the Christian will find something like this in his graces.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the nature of Hope, *why ſtiled* Hope *of* Salvation, *and why compared to an* Helmet.

WE have done with the connexive particle, whereby this piece is coupled to the former, and now come to addreſs our diſcourſe to the piece of Armour it ſelf, *Take the Helmet of Salvation.* Though we have not here (as in all the other) the grace expreſs'd, yet we need not be long at a loſs for it, if we conſult with another place, where our *Apoſtle* lends us a key to decypher his meaning in this: And none ſo fit to be Interpreter of the *Apoſtles* words, as himſelf; The place is, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 8. *And for an Helmet, the hope of Salvation:* So that without any further ſcruple, we ſhall faſten upon the grace of *Hope*, as intended by the Holy Ghoſt in this place. Now in order to a Treatiſe of this grace, it is requiſite, that ſomething be ſaid by Explication, that may ſerve as a light ſet up in the Entry, to lead us the better into the ſeveral rooms of the point, which is to be the ſubject of our diſcourſe; and this I ſhall do by ſhewing

Firſt, What *Hope* is.

Secondly, Why called *The hope of Salvation.*

Thirdly, Why this *Hope* is compared to an *Helmet.*

SECT. I.

Firſt, ALittle to open the nature of this grace of hope, which will be beſt done by laying down a plain deſcription of it, and briefly explicating the parts.

Hope is a Supernatural grace of God, whereby the believer through Christ, expects and waits for all those good things of the promise, which at present he hath not received, or not fully.

1. Here is the Author or efficient of it, *God*, who is called *the God of all grace*, 1 Pet. 5. 10. That is, the giver and worker of all grace, both as to the first seed, and further growth of it. It is impossible for the creature to make the least pile of grass, or being made, to make it grow. And as impossible to produce the least seed of grace in the heart, or to adde one cubite to the Stature of it. No, as God is the *Father of the rain*, by which the herbs in the Fields spring and grow, so also of those spiritual dews and influences, that must make every grace thrive and flourish. The *Apostle* in the former place teacheth us this, when he prays, that *God would perfect, establish, strengthen, settle them:* And as of all grace in general, so of this in particular, *Rom.* 15. 13. where he is stiled the *God of hope*; and by whom, we *abound in hope* also.

2. It is a *Supernatural*, and thereby we distinguish it from the Heathens hope, which with the rest of their moral vertues, so far as any excellency were found in them, came from God (to whom every man that cometh into the world, is beholden for all the light he hath, *John* 1. 9.) and is but the remains of mans first noble principles, as sometimes we shall see a broken Turret or two stand in the midst of the ruines of some stately Palace demolisht, that serves for little more than to help the Spectator to give a guess what goodly buildings once stood there.

Secondly, Hopes subject, *The Believer*. True hope is a Jewel that none wears but Christs Bride; a grace with which none is graced, but the believers soul; *Christless* and *hopeless*, are joyned together, *Ephes.* 2. 12. And here it is not amiss, to observe the order in which hope stands to Faith: In regard of time, they are not one before another; but in order of nature and operation, faith hath the precedency of hope. First Faith closeth with the promise as a true and faithful Word, then hope lifts up the soul to wait for the performance of it; Who goes out to meet him, that he believes will not come? The promise is as it were Gods Love-Letter to his Church and Spouse, in which he opens his very heart, and tells all he means to do for her: Faith reads

and

and embraceth it with joy, whereupon the believing soul by hope looks out at this Window with a longing expectation to see her Husbands Chariot come in the accomplishment thereof: So *Paul* gives a reason of his own hope from his faith, *Acts* 24. 14, 15. and prayes for the *Romans* faith in order to their hope, *Rom.* 15. 13.

Thirdly, Hopes object. *First*, in general, something *that is good*; if a thing be evil, we fear and flie from it; if good, we hope and wait for it. And here is one note of difference between it and faith; faith believes evil, as well as good; hope is conversant only about good. *Secondly*, It is the good of the promise; and in this faith and hope agree; both their lines are drawn from the same centre of the promise. Hope without a promise, is like an Anchor without ground to hold by; it bears the promise on its name, *Acts* 26. 6. *I stand and am judged* (saith *Paul*) *for the hope of the promise*: So *David* shews where he moves his ship, and casts his Anchor, *I hope in thy Word*, Psalme 119. 81. True hope will Trade only for true good. And we can call nothing so that the good God hath not promised; for the promise runs thus, *No good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly*, Psalm 84. 11. *Thirdly*, *all the good things of the promise*. As God hath encircled all good in the promise, so he hath promised nothing but good; and therefore Hopes object is all that the promise holds forth; only as the matter of the promise hath more degrees of goodness, so Hope intends its act, and longs more earnestly for it. God he is the chief good, and the fruition of him is promised as the utmost happiness of the creature: Therefore true hope takes her chief aim at God, and makes after all other promises in a subserviency to heave and lift the soul nearer unto him. He is called *The hope of Israel*, Jer. 17. 13. There is nothing beyond God, the enjoying of which the Believer projects; and nothing short of God that he can be so content with, as for the enjoying of it, to be willing to give God a general and full discharge of what by promise he stands engaged to him for. Now because God is only enjoy'd fully and securely in Heavens Blisseful State, therefore it is called *the hope of glory*. Col. 1. 2, 7. *of eternal life*, Titus 3. 7. *and salvation*, 1 Thes. 5. 7.

3.

4. *Fourthly*, and *laſtly*, the object of hope, is the good of the promiſe, not in hand, *but yet to be performed. Hope that is ſeen, is not hope; for what a man ſeeth, why doth he yet hope for?* Rom. 8. 24. futurity is intrinſecal to Hopes object, and diſtinguiſheth it from Faith, which gives a preſent being to the promiſe, and is ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, *the ſubſiſtence of things hoped for*, Heb. 11. 1. The good of the promiſe hath a kind of ſubſiſtence by Faith in the ſoul; it is Heaven as it were in an interview; it brings the Chriſtian and Heaven together, as if he were there already; hence they are ſaid by faith to kiſs and embrace the promiſe, *Heb.* 11. 13. as two friends when they meet; faith ſpeaks in the preſent tence, *We are Conquerors, yea we are more than Conquerors*; Hope *in futuro*, I ſhall. And *laſtly* I inſerted, *or not fully performed.* Partial performance of the promiſe *intends* hope, but compleat, *ends* hope, and ſwallows it up in love and joy. Indeed either the full performance of the promiſe, or execution of the threatning, ſhuts out all hope. In Heaven the promiſe is paid, and hope diſmiſt, becauſe we have what was lookt for; and in Hell the threatning is fully inflicted, and therefore no hope to be found among the Damned, becauſe no poſſibility of releaſe.

5. *Fourthly*, Hopes aide, by whoſe help and for whoſe ſake it expects to obtain the promiſe, and that is *Jeſus Chriſt*; it waits for all in and through him; he is therefore call'd *Our hope*, 1 Tim. 1. 1. becauſe through him we hope for what is promiſed, both as the Purchaſer, by whoſe death we have *hanc veniam ſperandi*, leave and liberty to expect good from God, and by whoſe Spirit we have *virtutem ſperandi*, ability to hope; ſo that both the ἐξουσία and δύναμις, the authority and ſtrength to hope, comes from Chriſt; the former by the effuſion of his blood for us, the latter by the infuſion of his Spirit into us.

SECT. II.

2. 2. WHy is the Chriſtians hope ſtiled *A hope of Salvation?*

A double reaſon is obvious. *Firſt*, becauſe Salvation compre-

prehends and takes within its circle the whole object of his hope. *Salvation* imports such a state of bliss, wherein meet eminently the mercies and enjoyments of all the promises, scattered some in one, and some in another; as at the Creation, the light which was first diffused through the firmament, was gathered afterward into the Sun. Cast up the particular summes of all the good things promised in the Covenant, and the *Total* which they amount unto is *Salvation*. The *ultima unitas* gives the denomination to the number, because it comprehends all; so Salvation the ultimate object of the Christians expectation, and that which comprehends the rest, denominates his *hope*. *Secondly*, It is called *a hope of Salvation*, to distinguish it from the Worldlings hope, whose portion *Psal. 16. is in this life*, and so his hope also. 'Tis confest, that many of these will pretend to a hope of salvation; but the truth is, they neither have right to it, nor are they very eager of it. They think themselves so well seated in this world, that if they might have their wish, it should be, That God would not remove them hence. Even when they say they hope to be saved, their consciences tell them they had rather stay here, than part with this world, in hope to mend themselves in the other. They blow up themselves into a hope and desire of salvation, more out of a dread of Hell, than liking of Heaven. None I think so mad among them, but had rather be saved, than damned; live in Heaven, than lie in Hell; yet the best of the whole pack, likes this world better than them both.

Sect. III.

3. THe third enquiry is, Why *Hope* is compared to a *Helmet*? For which conceive a double Reason. 3.

First, The *Helmet* defends the head, a principal part of the body, from dint of Bullet and Sword: So this *hope of Salvation* defends the Soul, the principal part of man, and the principal faculties of that, whereby no dangerous (to be sure no deadly) impression can by Satan or sin be made on it. Temptations may trou-

trouble, but cannot hurt, except their darts enter the will, and leave a wound there, by drawing it to ſome conſent and liking of them; from which this Helmet of Hope, if it be of the right make, and ſits ſure on the Chriſtians head, will defend him. It is hard to draw him into any Treaſonable practice againſt his Prince, who is both well ſatisfied of his favour at preſent, and ſtands alſo upon the ſtairs of Hope, expecting aſſuredly to be called up within a while to the higheſt preferment that the Court can afford, or his King give. No, the weapons of Rebellion and Treaſon, are uſually forg'd and faſhion'd in Diſcontents ſhop. When Subjects take themſelves to be neglected and ſlighted by their Prince, think their preferments are now at an end, and muſt look for no great favours more to come from him; This ſoftens them to receive every impreſſion of Diſloyalty that any Enemy to the King ſhall attempt to ſtamp them withal: As we ſee in the Iſraelites, who thinking the men of *Judah* (of whoſe Tribe the *King* was) had got a Monopoly of his favour, and themſelves to be ſhut out from ſharing (at leaſt equally) with them therein; how ſoon are they, even at a blaſt or two of *Sheba* his ſeditious Trumpet, made Rebells againſt their *Soveraign? We have no part in* David (ſaith *Sheba*) *neither have we any inheritance in the ſon of* Jeſſe; *every man to his Tents, O Iſrael*, 2 Sam. 20. 1. and ſee how this Treaſon runs, even like a Squib upon a Rope, *Ver.* 2. *Every man of Iſrael went up from after* David, *and followed* Sheba. Thus if once the ſoul fears it hath no part in God, and expects no inheritance from him, I know no ſin ſo great, but it may at the ſound of the Tempters Trumpet be drawn to commit.

Secondly, As the *Helmet* defends the Souldiers head from wounding, ſo his heart alſo from ſwowning. It makes him bold and fearleſs in battel, though amidſt Swords and Bullets. *Goliah* with his Helmet of Braſs and other furniture, how confidently and daringly did the man come on? as if he had been ſo incloſed in his Armour, that it was impoſſible any weapon could come near to deliver a meſſage of death unto him. This made him carry his creſt ſo high, and defie a whole Hoſt, till at laſt he paid his life for his pride and folly. But here is a *Helmet*, that whoever wears it, need never be put to ſhame for his holy boaſting. God himſelf allows him ſo to do, and will bear him out in this rejoycing

of

of his hope. *Isa.* 49. 23. *They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.* This made holy *David* so undaunted in the midst of his enemies, *Though an hoast should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear,* Psal. 27. 3. his hope would not suffer his heart so much as beat within him, for any fear of what they could do to him: He had this Helmet of Salvation on, and therefore he saith, *Ver.* 6. *Mine head shall be lift up above mine enemies round about me.* A man cannot drown so long as his head is above water. Now it is the proper Office of Hope to do this for the Christian in times of any danger; *Luke* 21. 28. *When these things come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your Redemption draweth nigh.* A strange time one would think, for Christ then to bid his Disciples lift up their heads in, when they see other *mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth,* Vers. 26. yet now is the time of the rising of their Sun, when others is setting, and blackness of darkness overtaking them; because now the Christians feast is coming, for which Hope hath saved its stomack so long, *Your Redemption draweth nigh.*

Two things make the head hang down; fear, and shame; hope easeth the Christians heart of both these, and so forbids him to give any sign of a desponding mind by a dejected countenance.

And so much may suffice for Explication of the words.

I come now to lay down the one general point of Doctrine, from which our whole discourse on this piece of Armour, shall be drawn.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the use of hope in the Christians warfare, and of the high and noble exploits it raiseth the Christian to undertake.

Doctrine. THat Hope is a grace of singular use and service to us all along our spiritual Warfare and Christian course. We are directed *To take the Helmet of Salvation:* And this not for some particular occasion, and then hang it by, till another extraordinary streight calls us to take it down, and use it again: But we must take it so as never to lay it aside, till God shall take off this Helmet to put on a Crown of glory in the room of it. *Be sober, and hope to the end,* is the *Apostle Peters* counsel, 1 *Pet.* 1. 13. There are some Engines of Warre that are of use but now and then, as Ladders for scaling of a Town or Fort, which done, are laid aside for a long time, and not missed.

But the Helmet is of continual use. We shall need it as long as our War with Sin and Satan lasts. The Christian is not beneath hope, so long as above ground; nor above hope, so long as he is beneath Heaven. Indeed when once he enters the Gates of that glorious City; then Farewell Hope, and welcome Love for ever, he may say with the Holy Martyr. Armour becomes Earth, but Robes Heaven. Hope goes into the field, and waits on the Christian till the last Battel be fought, and the field cleared, and then faith and hope together carry him in the Chariot of the promise to Heaven Door, where they deliver up his soul into the hands of Love and Joy, which stand ready to conduct him into the blissful presence of God.

But

But that I may ſpeak more particularly of Hopes ſerviceableneſs to the Chriſtian, and the ſeveral Offices it performeth for him, I ſhall reduce all to theſe four heads.

Firſt, Hope puts the Chriſtian upon high and noble Exploits.

Secondly, It makes him diligent and faithful in the meaneſt ſervices.

Thirdly, It keeps him patient amidſt the greateſt ſufferings.

Fourthly, It compoſeth and quiets his ſpirit, when God ſtayes longeſt before he comes to perform promiſes. Firſt of the firſt.

Firſt, Hope of Salvation puts the Chriſtian upon high and noble exploits. It is a Grace born for great Actions. Faith and Hope are the two Poles on which all the Chriſtians noble enterprizes turn. As carnal hope excites carnal men to their atchievements which gain them any renown in the world; ſo is this heavenly hope influential into the Saints undertakings. What makes the *Merchant* ſell Houſe and Land, and ſhip his whole eſtate away to the other end almoſt of the World, and this amidſt a thouſand hazards from Pyrates, waves and winds, but *Hope* to get a greater by this bold adventure? What makes the daring *Souldier* ruſh into the furious battel upon the very mouth of death it ſelf, but *Hope* to ſnatch Honour and Spoyle out of its jaws? *Hope* is his Helmet, Shield, and all, which makes him laugh on the face of all danger. In a word, what makes the *Scholar* beat his brains ſo hard, ſometimes with the hazard of breaking them, by over-ſtreining his Parts with too eager and hot a purſuit of learning, but *Hope* of commencing ſome degrees higher in the knowledge of thoſe ſecrets in nature that are lockt up from vulgar underſtandings? who when he hath attained his deſire, is paid but little better for all his pains and ſtudy, that have worn nature in him to the ſtumps, than he is that tears the fleſh off his hands and knees with creeping up ſome craggy Mountain, which proves but a barren, bleak place, to ſtand in, and wraps him up in the clouds from the ſight of others, leaving him little more to pleaſe himſelf with but this, That he can look over other mens heads, and

see a little further than they. Now if these pedling hopes can prevail with men to such fixed resolutions for the obtaining of these poor, sorry things, which borrow part of their goodness from mens fancy and imagination; How much more effectual must the Christians Hope of eternal life be to provoke him to the atchievement of more noble exploits! Let a few instances suffice.

Sect. I.

First, THis Hope raiseth in the Christian an Heroick resolution against those lusts that held him before in bondage. The *Israelites* who couched so tamely under their *Egyptian* Burthens, without any attempt made by them to shake off the *Oppressours* Yoke; when once *Moses* came from God to give them Hope of an approaching Salvation, and his report had gain'd some credit to be believed by them, it is strange to see what a mighty change the impression of their new-conceived Hope, made upon them! On a sudden their mettal returns, and their blood, that with anguish and dispair had so long chilled, and been even frozen in their veins, grows warm again. They who before hardly durst let their groans be heard (so cowed were their spirits with hard labour) dare now, fortified with Hope, break open their Prison doors, and March out of *Egypt* toward the place of Rest promised, maugre all the power and wrath of enraged *Pharaoh*, who pursued them. Truly, thus it is with a soul in regard of Sins Bondage. O how impotent and poor-spirited is a soul void of this heavenly Hope! what a tame slave hath Satan of him! He is the foot-stool for every base lust to trample upon. He suffers the Devil to back and ride him whether he pleaseth, without winching: No pudle so filthy, but Satan may draw him through it with a twine thread: The poor wretch is well enough contented with his ignoble Servitude, because he knows no better Master than him he serves, nor better wages than the swill of his sensual pleasures which his lusts allow him: But let the news of Salvation come to the ear of this Sin-deluded soul, and a spiritual eye be given him to see the transcendant glory thereof, with a crevice of hope set open to him, that he is the person that shall inherit

it,

it, if willing to make an exchange of Satan for Christ, and of the slavery of his lusts, for the liberty of his Redeemers service; O what havock then doth the Soul begin to make among his lusts! he presently vows the death of them all, and sets his head at work how he may soonest and most effectually rid his hands of them. *Every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself, even as he is pure*, 1 John 3. 3. He now looks upon his lusts with no better eye than a Captive Prince would do on his cruel Keepers, out of whose hands could he but make an escape, he should presently enjoy his Crown and Kingdom; and therefore meditates his utmost revenge upon them. There may be some hasty purposes taken up by carnal men against their lusts, upon some accidental discontent they meet with now and then in the prosecution of them: But alas, the Swords they draw against them, are soon in their sheaths again, and all the seeming fray comes to nothing in the end. They like *Esau*, go out full and angry in a sudden mood, but a Present comes from their lusts that bribes them from hurting them; yea, so reconciles them to them, that as he did by his Brother, they can fall upon the necks of those lusts to kiss them, which a while before they threatned to kill; and all for want of a true hope of Heaven to out-bid the profers their lusts make to appease their anger, which would never yield a peace should be patcht up with them on such infinite hard terms as it must needs be, the loss of Eternal Salvation. He that hath a minde to provide himself with Arguments to Arm him against sins motions, need not go far to seek them: But he that handles this one well, and drives it home to the head, will not need many more. What is the sin this would not prostrate! Art thou tempted to any sensual lust? Ask thy hope what thou lookest to be in Heaven. And canst thou yield to play the beast on earth, who hopest to be made like the pure and holy Angels in Heaven! Is it a sin of profit that bewitcheth thee? is not hope of Heaven a spel strong enough to Charme this Devil? Can Gold bear any sway with thee that hopest to be Heir of that City where Gold bears no price? wherefore is that blissful place said to be paved with Gold, but to let us know, it shall be there trampled upon as of no account? and wilt thou let it now lie in thy Heart, that will ere long be laid under thy Feet? Is it a sin of Revenge? dost thou not hope for a day when thy dear Saviour will plead thy Cause? and what needest thou then take

his work out of his hand? Let him be his own Judge, that hath no Hope; the Judge when He comes, will take his part.

Sect. II.

2. Secondly, THis Hope ennobles and enables the Christian to contemn the present world, with all its pompe, treasure, and pleasure, to which the rest of the sons of men are every man of them basely enslaved, and held by the leg, as a Prisoner by his Chain. When once Faith makes discovery of Land that the Christian hath lying in Heaven, and by Hope he begins to lot upon it, as that which he shall shortly take up at his remove from earth: truly then the price of this worlds felicity falls low in his account; he can sell all his hopes from it very cheap, yea he can part with what he hath in hand of this worlds growth (when God calls him to it) more freely than *Alexander* did the Cities he took; because when all this is gone, he shall leave himself a better hope than that great *Monarch* had to live upon. The hopes of Heaven leave a blot upon the world in the Christians thoughts. It is no more now to him, than the Asses were to annointed *Saul*. Story tells us of some *Turks*, who have upon the sight of *Mahomets* Tomb, put their eyes out, that they might not defile them (forsooth) with any common object after they had been blessed with seeing one so Sacred. I am sure many a gracious soul there hath been, who by a prospect of Heavens glory, the Palace of the great God, set before the eye of their Faith, have been so ravished with the sight, that they have desired God even to seal up their eyes by death, with *Simeon*, who would not by his good will, have lived a day after that blessed hour in which his eyes had beheld the Salvation of God. *Abraham* was under the hope of this Salvation, and therefore, *he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange Country; for he looked for a City which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God*, Heb. 11. 9, 10. *Canaan* would have liked him well enough, if God had not told him of a Heaven that he meant to give him, in comparison to which, *Canaan* is now but *Cabul*, a dirty Land in his judgement. So *Paul* tells us not only the low

thoughts

thoughts he hath himself of the world, but as they agree with the common sence of all believers, whose hope is come to any consistency and settlement; *For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour*, Phil. 3. 20. Mark, he sets the Saint with his back upon earth; and draws his reason from their hope, *from whence we look, &c.* Indeed he that looks on Heaven, must needs look off Earth. The souls eye can as little as the bodies eye, be above and below at the same time. Every man converseth most where he hopes for to receive his greatest gains and advantage. The *Publicane* sits at the receipt of Custom, there comes in his gains: The Courtier stands at his Princes Elbow: The Merchant, if you will find him, look for him in his Ware-House, or at the Exchange: But the Christians Hope carries him by all these doors; Here's not my Hope (saith the Soul) and therefore not my haunt: My Hope is in Heaven, from whence I look for the Saviour to come, and my Salvation to come with him; there I live, walk, and wait. Nothing but a stedfast, well-grounded hope of Salvation can buy off the Creatures worldly hopes. The heart of man cannot be in this world without a hope; and if it hath no hope for Heaven, it must of necessity take in at earth, and borrow one there, such as it can afford. What indeed can suit an earthly heart better than an earthly hope? And that which is a mans hope (though poor and pedling) is highly prized, and hardly parted with; as we see in a man like to drown, and hath only some Weed or Bough by the Banks side to hold by, hee'l dye with it in his hand rather than let go; hee'l endure blows and wounds, rather than lose his hold: Nothing can take him from it, but that which he hopes may serve better to save him from drowning. Thus it is with a man whose hope is set upon the World, and whole happiness expected to be paid in from thence; O how such a one huggs and hangs about the World! you may as soon perswade a Fox to come out of his Hole, where he hath taken Sanctuary from the Dogs; such a one to cast off his hopes! no, he is undone without this pelf, and that honour; it is that he hath laid up his Hopes in, and Hope and Life are ever kept in the same hand; scare and threaten him with what you will, still the mans heart will hold its own: Yea, throw Hell-fire into his bosome, and tell him this love of the World, and making gold his Hope, will damn him ano-

another day, ſtill he will hold to his way. *Felix* is a fit inſtance for this, *Acts* 24. 26. *Paul* preach'd a thundering Sermon before him; and though the Preacher was at the Bar, and *Felix* on the Bench, yet God ſo Arm'd the Word, That he trembled to hear the Priſoner *ſpeak of righteouſneſs, and judgement to come*: Yet this man, notwithſtanding his conſcience was ſtruggling with the fears of judgement, and ſome ſparks of divine vengeance had taken fire on him, could at the ſame time be ſending out his heart on a Covetous Errand, to look for a Bribe, for want of which he left that bleſſed Servant of God in his bloody enemies hands; for *ver.* 26. it is ſaid, *He hoped that money ſtould have been given him of* Paul, *that he might looſe him*: But he miſſed his Market; for as a ſordid hope of a little money made him baſely refuſe to deliver *Paul*; ſo the bleſſed hope which *Paul* had for another world, made him more honourably diſdain to purchaſe his deliverance at his hands with a Bribe.

SECT. III.

3 Thirdly. THis hope of Salvation where it is ſtedfaſt, makes the Chriſtian active and zealous for God. It is called *A lively hope*, 1 Pet. 3. They are men of mettal that have it; you may expect more from him than many others, and not be deceived. Why are men dull and heavy in the ſervice of God? Truly becauſe their hopes are ſo. Hopeleſs and lifeleſs go together. No marvel the work goes hardly off a hand, when men have no hope, or but little, to be well paid for their labour in doing of it. He that thinks he works for a Song (as we ſay) will not ſing at his work (I mean, be forward and cheery in it.) The beſt Cuſtomer is ſure to be ſerved beſt and firſt; and him we count the beſt Cuſtomer, that we hope will be the beſt Pay-Maſter: If God be thought ſo, we will leave all to do his buſineſs. This made *Paul* engage ſo deep in the ſervice of the Goſpel, even to loſe his worldly friends, and lay his own life to ſtake; it was *for the hope of the promiſe*, Act. 26. 6. This made the other *Iſraelites* that feared God, follow the Trade of Godlineſs ſo cloſe, *ver.* 7. *Unto which promiſe, our twelve Tribes inſtantly ſerving God day and*

and night, hope to come. Mark, they are both instant and constant, ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ, they run with full speed, stretching themselves forth as in a Race, and this night and day; no stop nor halt in their way, but ever putting on: And what is it that keeps them in breath? even the hope that they shall at last come to that Salvation promised. Nothing better to expectorate and clear the soul of this dull flegme of sloth and listlessness of spirit in the service of God, than Hope well improved and strengthened. It is the very Physick which the Apostle prescribes for this disease, *Hebr.* 6. 11, 12. *We desire every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end, that ye be not slothful.*

SECT. IV.

Fourthly. HOpe begets in the Christian a holy impatience after further attainments, especially when it grows to some strength: The higher our hopes of Salvation rise, the more will our hearts widen and distend themselves in holy desires; *Rom.* 8. 23. *Not only they, but we our selves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we our selves groan within our selves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* Methinks rejoycing would better become them for what they had already, than groaning for what they have not. Who may better stay long for their Dinner, than they who have their stomacks stay'd with a good Break-fast? This would hold in bodily food, but not spiritual. No doubt, the sweetness which they tasted from their first-fruits in hand, did cheer their spirits; but the thoughts of what was behind, made them groan. Hope waits for all, and will not let the soul sit down contented, till all the Dishes be on the board, till the whole Harvest that stands on the Field of the Promise, be reaped and well inned; yea, the more the Christian hath received in partial payments, the deeper groans Hope makes the soul fetch for what is behind: And that *First*, because these fore-tasts do acquaint the Christian more with the nature of those joyes which are in Heaven, and so enlarge his understanding to more have raised conceptions of the felicity those enjoy 4.

joy that are arrived there: And the encreasing of his knowledge must needs enlarge his desires, and those desires break out into sad groans, to think what sweet Wine is drunk in full bowles by glorified Saints, and he live where only a sip is allowed, that doth not satisfie, but kindle his thirst. It is harder now for him to live on this side Heaven, than before he knew so much. He is like one that stands at the door, within which is a Company set at a rich Feast; he hears them how merry they are; through the Key-hole he sees what variety they have; and by a little which he licks from the Trenchers that are brought out, is sensible how delicious their fare is: O how such a ones teeth would water after their chear, which another misseth not, that hears not of it, or only hears, and tastes not of their Dainties! The neerer the soul stands to Heaven, and the more he knows of their joyes, the more he blesseth them, and pities himself. None long for Heaven more than those who enjoy most of heaven; all delayes now are exceedingly tedious to such. Their continual moan is, *Why is his Chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot?* The last year is thought longer by the Apprentice, than all his time before; because now it is neerer out; and if delays be so tedious, what then are desertions to such a soul, who hath had his hopes of Salvation raised high, by the sweet illapses of the Spirit, and fore-tastes of glory! No doubt *Moses* his death so nigh *Canaan*, after he had tasted of the fruit of the Land at the Spies hand, was exceeding grievous. To lose a Child grown up, when we seem ready to reap our hopes conceived of him, is more than to part with two in the Cradle, that have not yet drawn out our expectations far. The Christian indeed cannot quite lose his hopes, yet he may have them nipt and set back, as a forward Spring, by after-claps of Winter weather, which pinches so much the more, because the warm beams of the Sun had made the Herbs come forth and disclose themselves: And so desertions from God do make the saddest impression upon those above all others, whose expectation had advanced far, and by the present sence of divine goodness, been unfolded into a kind of rejoycing through Hope of Glory; now to meet with a damp from the frowns of the Almighty, and to be benighted by the withdrawing of that light which did so ravish it, O how dreadful must this sudden change be to the soul!

Secondly,

Secondly, Theſe preſent attainments of grace or comfort, they do imbolden the Soul to expect yet more, and ſo provoke the Chriſtian to preſs on for the full payment of all: See both theſe in *David*, Pſal. 63. 7. *Becauſe thou haſt been my help, therefore in the ſhadow of thy wings will I rejoyce.* The preſent boon he hath got, makes him rejoyce in hope of what is yet to come, and by this ſente he is carryed out with full cry to purſue the Chaſe for more, as appears in the very next words, *ver.* 8. *My ſoul followeth hard after thee.* And no wonder, if we conſider, that God gives his people their experiences with this very Notion ſtamped on them, *i.e.* to raiſe their expectations for further mercies at his hand, *Hoſea* 2. 15. *I will give her her Vineyards from thence, and the Valley of Achor for a door of hope.* God is there ſpeaking to a ſoul converted and newly taken into Covenant, what bleſſings he will beſtow on it, as the happy effects of its Reconciliation to God, and Marriage with Chriſt, and he alludes to his dealing with *Iſrael*, who came out of a deſolate Wilderneſs (where they had wandred, and endured unſpeakable hardſhip forty years) into a pleaſant, fruitful Countrey, in the very entrance whereof this *Achor* lay, which when God gave them, he would not have them look on it as in it ſelf it was a little ſpot of ground, and not ſo much worth, but as the opening of a door through which he would undertake to let them into the poſſeſſion of the whole Land in proceſs of time; which circumſtance believed by them, made *Joſhua* advance his Banners with ſo much courage againſt the proudeſt of his enemies, well knowing, man could not ſhut that door upon them, which God had open'd to them. Thus every particular aſſiſtance God gives the Chriſtian againſt any one corruption, is intended by God to be an *Achor*, a door of hope, from which he may expect the total overthrow of that curſed ſeed in his boſome: When he addes the leaſt degree of ſtrength to his grace or comfort, he gives us an *Achor*, or door of hope, that he will conſummate both in glory; O what courage muſt this needs bring to thee (poor heart) in thy fears and faintings! *Paul* had many enemies at *Epheſus* to oppoſe him, but having *an effectual door open'd unto him* for his encouragement, he went on undauntedly, 1 *Cor.* 16. 9. As an Army, when after ſtubborn reſiſtance by the enemy, who labour what they can to keep them out, the Door or

Gate of the City flies open, then the Souldiers press in amain with a shout, *The City is their own.* Thus when after long tugging, and much wrestling with God for pardon of sin, or strength against sin, the door of the promise flies open, and God comes in with some assisting, comforting presence, now Hope takes heart, and makes the soul fall on with double force and zeal.

CHAP. IV.

Sheweth, *How Hope makes the Christian content with, and faithful in the meanest place, and lowest employment that God orders for him.*

Secondly 2

Hope raiseth the Christians spirit to attempt great exploits, so it makes him faithful in the meanest and lowest services, that the providence of God calls him to: for the same providence layes out every one his work and calling, which sets bounds for their habitations on the earth. Some he sets on the high places of the earth, and appoints them Honourable Employments, suitable to their place: Others he pitcheth down on lower ground, and orders them in some obscure Corner to employ themselves about work of an inferiour nature all their life, and we need not be ashamed to do that work which the great God sets us about. The *Italians* say true, *No man fouls his hands in doing his own business.* Now, to encourage every Christian to be faithful in his particular place, he hath made promises that are applicable to them all. Promises are like the beams of the Sun, they shine as freely in at the Window of the poor mans cottage, as of the Princes Palace. And these *Hope* trades with, and from these animates the Christian at his work; indeed we are no more faithful in our Callings, than acted by Faith and Hope therein.

in. Now you shall observe, God layes his promise, so as it may strengthen our hands and hearts against the chief discouragement that is most like to weaken them in their Callings. The great discouragement of those high and publick employments, *Magistracy* and *Ministry*, is the difficulty of the *Province*, and opposition they find from the angry world. These therefore are guarded and supported with such promises as may fortifie their hearts against the force and fury with which the world comes forth to oppose them: *I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee; be strong, and be of good courage*, Josh. 1.5. which was given to *Israels* chief *Magistrate*. And the *Ministers* promise suits well with this, as having ordinarily the same difficulties, enemies, and discouragements, *Go teach all Nations*; and, *Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*, Matth. 28. 20. Againe, the temptation that usually haunts persons in low and more ignoble Callings, is the very meanness of them, which occasions discontent and envy in some, to see themselves on the floor, and their brother preferr'd to more Honourable Services, in others, dejection of spirit, as if they were, like the *Eunuch*, but dry Trees, unprofitable, and brought no glory to God, while others by their more eminent places and callings, have the advantage of being highly serviceable to God in their Generations. Now to arm the Christian against this temptation, and remove this discouragement, God hath annexed as great a reward in the promise to his faithfulness in the meanest employment, as the most Honourable is capable of. What more mean and despicable than the Servants employment? yet no less than Heaven it self is promised to them, if faithful, *Col.* 3. 22. (he is speaking there to such) *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ.* Where observe, *First*, what Honour he puts on the poor servants work, *He serves the Lord Christ*; yea, in the lowest piece of work that belongs to his Office: his drudgery is divine service, as well as his praying and hearing; for he saith, *Whatever ye do. Again*, observe, The reward that is laid up for such, and that is as great, as he shall receive that hath been faithful in Ruling Kingdoms; *the reward of the inheritance.* As if God had said, Be not, O my child, out of love with thy course, homely work; ere long thou shalt sit

as high, as he that ſwayes Scepters; thongh your employment now be not the ſame with his, yet your acceptation is the ſame, and ſo ſhall your reward alſo be. Thus we ſee, as we beſtow more abundant honour on thoſe members of our body, which we think leſs Honourable; ſo doth Chriſt with thoſe members of his body, which by reaſon of their low place in the world, may be thought to be moſt deſpiſed, he puts an abundant Honour upon them in his promiſe. And where Hope is raiſed, the Chriſtian cannot but take ſweet ſatisfaction from the expectation thereof: The poor Plough-man that is a Saint, and ploughs in hope of reaping Salvation, would be as well contented with his place and work, as the braveſt Courtier is with his. Think of this, when any of you have a Servant to chooſe, if you would have your work faithfully and heartily done, employ ſuch about it (if they be to be had) as have a hope of Salvation: This will not ſuffer them to wrong you, though they could: Their Helmet will defend them from ſuch temptations. *Jacob* was a true drudge for his Maſter *Laban* by day and by night, though he uſed him none of the beſt, in chopping and changing his wages ſo oft; but *Jacob* ſerved in hope, and expected his reward from a better Maſter than *Laban*; and this made him faithful to an unfaithful man. *Joſeph* would not wrong his Maſter, though at the requeſt of his Miſtris; he choſe to ſuffer his unjuſt anger, rather than accept of her unchaſte love. The evidence of this grace in a ſervant, is better ſecurity for his faithfulneſs, than a Bond of a thouſand pounds.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Sheweth the mighty influence Hope hath upon the Christian to support him in his afflictions, in particular, what help it gives, and how.

Thirdly. THis Hope of Salvation supports the Soul in the greatest afflictions. The Christians patience is, as it were, his back, on which he bears his burdens; and some afflictions are so heavy, that he needs a broad one to carry them well. But if Hope lay not the pillow of the promise between his back and his burthen, the least cross will prove unsupportable: Therefore it is called *The patience of hope*, 1 Thes. 1. 3. There is a patience, I confess, and many know not a better, when men force themselves into a kind of quietness in their troubles, because they cannot help it, and there is no hope. This I may call a desperate patience, and it may do them some service for a while, and but for a while. If Despair were a good cure for troubles, the damned would have more ease; for they have despair enough, if that would help them. There is another patience also very common in the world, and that is a blockish, stupid patience, which, like *Nabals* mirth, lasts no longer than they are drunk with ignorance and senselessness: for they no sooner come to themselves to understand the true state they are in, but their hearts dye within them: But the Patience of Hope, we are now treating of, is a sober grace, and abides as long as Hope lasts; when Hope is lively and active, then it floats, yea even danceth aloft the waters of affliction, as a tight, sound ship, doth in a tempestuous Sea; but when Hope springs a leak, then the billows break into the Christians bosome, and he sinks apace, till Hope, with much labour, at the Pump of the pro- 3.

promiſe clears the ſoul again. This was *Davids* very caſe, *Pſal.* 69. 1. *Save me, for the waters come into my ſoul.* What means he by coming *into his ſoul?* Surely, no other than this, that they oppreſſed his ſpirit, and as it were ſued into his very conſcience, raiſing fears and perplexities there, by reaſon of his ſins, which at preſent put his Faith and Hope to ſome diſorder, that he could not for a while, ſee to the comfortable end of his affliction, but was as one under-water, and covered with his fears; as appears by what follows, *Ver.* 2. *I ſink in deep mire, where there is no ſtanding.* He compares himſelf to one in a Quagmire, that can feel no firm ground to bear him up; and obſerve whence his trouble roſe, and where the waters made their entrance, *Ver.* 5. *O God, thou knoweſt my fooliſhneſs, and my ſinnes are not hid from thee.* This holy man lay under ſome freſh guilt, and this made him ſo uncomfortable under his affliction, becauſe he ſaw his ſin in the face of that, and taſted ſome diſpleaſure from God for it in his outward trouble, which made it ſo bitter in the going down; and therefore when once he hath humbled himſelf in a mournful confeſſion of his ſin, and was able to ſee the coaſt clear betwixt Heaven and him, ſo as to believe the pardon of his ſinne, and hope for good news from God again, he then returns to his ſweet temper, and can ſing in the ſame affliction, where before he did ſink.

SECT. I.

BUt more particularly I ſhall ſhew what powerful influence Hope hath on the Chriſtian in affliction, and how. *Firſt*, What influence it hath.

1. *Firſt*, It ſtills and ſilenceth him under affliction. It keeps the Kings peace in the heart, which elſe would ſoon be in an uproare. A hopeleſs ſoul is clamorous; one while it chargeth God, another while it reviles inſtruments. It cannot long reſt, and no wonder, when Hope is not there to rock it aſleep. Hope hath a rare Art in ſtilling a froward ſpirit, when nothing elſe can; as the Mother can make the crying child quiet by laying it to the Breaſt, when the Rod makes it cry worſe. This way *David* took,

took, and found it effectual; when his soul was out of quiet, by reason of his present affliction, he lays his soul to the Breast of the promise, *Why art thou disquieted, O my soul, within me? Hope thou in God*, Psal. 42. And here his soul sweetly sleeps, as the child, with the Teat in his mouth: and that this was his usual way, we may think by the frequent instances we find to this purpose; thrice we find him taking this course in two *Psalmes*, 42. and 43. When *Aaron* and *Miriam* were so uncivil with *Moses*, and used him so ill in their foul language, no doubt it was a heavy affliction to the spirit of that holy man, and aggravation of his sorrow, to consider out of whose bow those sharp Arrows came; yet it is said, *Moses held his peace*, waiting for God to clear his innocency; and his patience, made God, no doubt, the more angry to see this meek man wrong'd, who durst trust him with the righting of his name, and therefore with such speed he wiped off the dirt they had thrown on him, before it could soak in to the prejudice of his good name in the thoughts of others. Indeed this waiting on God for deliverance in an afflicted state, consists much in a holy silence; *Psal.* 62. 1. *Truly, my soul waiteth upon God, from him cometh my salvation*: Or as the *Hebrew*, *My soul is silent*: It is a great mercy, in an affliction that is sharp, to have our bodily sences, so as not to lie raving or roaring, but still and quiet, much more to have the heart silent and patient. And we find the heart is as soon heat into a distemper, as the head. Now what the Spunge is to the Cannon when hot with often shooting in, that is Hope to the Soul in multiplied afflictions; it cools the spirit, and meekens it, that it doth not flye apieces, and break out into distemper'd thoughts or words against God.

2. *Secondly*, This Hope fills the afflicted soul with such inward joy and consolation, that it can laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath; it is called *The rejoycing of Hope*, Heb. 3. 6. And Hope never affords more joy than in affliction; it is on a watry cloud that the Sun paints those curious colours in the Rain-bow. *Rom.* 5. 3. *Rejoyce in the hope of glory, and not only so, but we glory in tribulation.* Glorying, is rejoycing in a ravishment, when it is so great, that it cannot contain it self within the Christians own breast, but comes forth in some outward expression, and lets others know what a Feast it sits at within.

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The springs of comfort lie high indeed, when his joy pores out at the mouth: And all this joy, with which the suffering Saint is entertain'd, is sent in by Hope at the cost of Christ, who hath provided such unspeakable glory for them in heaven, as will not suffer them to pity or bemoan themselves for those tribulations that befall them on the way to it. *Dum mala pungunt, bona promissa ungunt.* Hope breaks the *Alablaster-box* of the promise over the Christians head, and so diffuseth the consolations thereof abroad the soul, which like a precious oyntment, have a vertue as to exhilarate and refresh the spirit in its faintings, so to heale the wounds, and remove the smart, which the Christians poor heart may feel from its affliction, according to the *Apostle* in the fore-mentioned place, *Vers.* 5. *Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.* There are two graces, which Christ useth above any other, to fill the soul with joy; and they are Faith and Hope, because these two fetch all their Wine of Joy without doors: Faith tells the soul what Christ hath done for it, and so comforts it; Hope revives the soul with the News of what Christ will do; both draw at one Tapp, Christ and his promise; whereas the other graces present the soul with its own inherent excellencies, what it doth and suffers for him, rather than what he for them: So that it were neither honourable for Christ, nor safe for the Saint, to draw his joy from this Vessel. Not honourable to Christ! This were the way to have the Kings Crown set on the Subjects head, and cry *Hosanna* to the grace of Christ in us, which is due only to the mercy of God to us; for thither we will carry our praise, whence we have our joy; and therefore upon our Allegiance we are *only to rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*, Phil. 3. 3. And it would be no more safe for us, than honourable for him; because of the instability of our hearts, and unconstant actings of our graces, which are as oft ebbing as flowing; and so our joy could not be constant, because our graces are not; but as these Springs lie high or low, so would this rise and fall; yea, we were sure to drink more Water than Wine, oftner want joy than have it; whereas now the Christians Cup need never be empty, because he draws his Wine from an undrainable Fountain, that never sends any poor soul away ashamed, as the Brook of our inherent grace would certainly, at one time or other, do.

SECT.

Sect. II.

Quest. *But whence hath Hope this vertue? or what are the ingredients in Hopes Cordial that thus exhilarates the Saints Spirit in Affliction?*

Answ. 1. First, Hope brings certain news of a happy issue, that shall shortly close up all the wounds made by his present sufferings. When God comes to save his afflicted servants, though he may antedate their hopes, and surprize them before they looked for him, yet he doth not come unlook't for; Salvation is that they lot upon; *Jerem.* 29. 11. *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* That is, an end suitable to the hopes and expectations taken up by you. Hope is a prying grace, it is able to look beyond the exteriour transactions of Providence: It can by the help of the promise, peep into the very bosome of God, and read what thoughts and purposes are writ there concerning the Christians particular estate, and this it imparts to him, bidding him not be at all troubled to hear God speaking roughly to him in the language of his providence; for saith Hope, I can assure thee he means thee well, whatever he saith that sounds otherwise: For as the Law which came hundreds of years after the promise made to *Abraham*, could not disannul it; so neither can any intervening afflictions make void those thoughts and counsels of love, which so long before have been set upon his heart for thy deliverance and salvation. Now such a one must needs have a great advantage above others for the pacifying and satisfying his spirit concerning the present proceedings of God towards him; because though the actings of God upon the outward stage of providence, be now sad and grievous; yet he is acquainted with Heavens Plot therein, and is admitted as it were into the attiring room of his secret counsel, where he sees garments of salvation preparing, in which he shall at last be clad, and come forth with joy. The Traveller, when taken in a storm, can stand patiently under a Tree while it rains, because he hopes it is but a showre, and sees it clear up in one part of the Heavens, while it is dark in another. Providence, I am sure, is never so dark and

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cloudy, but Hope can see fair weather a coming from the promise; *When these things begin, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh*, Luke 21.28. And that is as black a day as can come. When the Christians affairs are most disconsolate, he may soon meet with a happy change. The joy of that blessed day, 1 *Cor.* 15.52. comes, ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall be changed.* In one moment sick and sad, in the next well and glad, never to know more what groans and tears mean. Now clad with the rags of mortal flesh, made miserable with a thousand troubles that attend it; in the twinkling of an eye arrayed with Robes of immortality, imbossed and inriched with a thousand times more glory than the Sun it self wears in that garment of light, which now dazleth our eyes to look on. *It is but winking* (said a holy Martyr to his Fellow-sufferer in the fire with him) *and our pain and sorrow is all over.* Who can wonder to see a Saint cheerful in his afflictions, that knows what good news he looks to hear from Heaven, and how soon he knows not? You have heard of the *Weapon Salve*, that it cures wounds at a distance; such a kind of Salve is Hope. The Saints hope is laid up in Heaven, and yet it heals all their wounds they receive on earth. But this is not all; for as Hope propheſies well concerning the happy end of the Christians afflictions, so it assures him he shall be well tended and look't to, while he lies under them. If Christ sends his Disciples to Sea, he means to be with them when they most need his company. The well child may be left a while by the Mother, but the sick one she will by no means stirre from; *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee*, Isa. 43.2. You know what God said to *Moses*, when he was sick of his employment, and made so many mannerly, or rather unmannerly excuses from his own inability, and all that he might have leave to lay down his Commission; *Go*, saith God, *Exod.* 4.12. *And I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.* And again, *Vers.* 14. *Is not* Aaron *the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well, and also behold he cometh forth to meet thee.* Thus God did animate him, and toll him on to like that hard Province he was called to. Methinks, I hear Hope as Gods Messenger, speaking after the same sort to the drooping soul oppressed with the thoughts of some great affliction, and ready to conclude

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he ſhall never be able to ſtemm ſo rough a Tide, bear up, and cheerfully lift up his head above ſuch ſurging waves. Go O my ſoul (ſaith Hope) for thy God will be with thee, and thou ſhalt ſuffer at his charge. Is not Chriſt thy Brother? yea, is he not thy Husband? He, thou thinkeſt, can tell how to ſuffer, who was brought up to the Trade from the Cradle to the Croſs; Behold, even he comes forth to meet thee, glad to ſee thy face, and willing to impart ſome of his Suffering-skill unto thee. That man indeed muſt needs carry a heavy heart to priſon with him, who knows neither how he can be maintained there, nor delivered thence: But Hope eaſeth the heart of both theſe, which taken away, ſuffering is a harmleſs thing, and not to be dreaded.

2. Hope aſſures the Chriſtian not only of the certainty of Salvation coming, but alſo of the tranſcendency of this Salvation to be ſuch, as the ſorrow of his preſent ſufferings bears no proportion to the joy of that. This kept the Primitive Chriſtians from ſwouning, while their enemies let out their blood. They had the ſente of this Hope to exhilarate their ſpirits; 2 *Cor.*4.16. *For which cauſe we faint not; but though our outward man periſh, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* Is not this ſtrange, that their ſpirit and courage ſhould encreaſe with the loſing of their blood! What rare, unheard of Cordial, was this! See *Verſ.* 17. *For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a farre more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Behold here the difference betwixt hopes of Heaven, and hopes of the World. Theſe latter, they are fanciful and ſlighty, ſeem great in hope, but prove nothing in hand; like *Eves* Apple, fair to look on, as they hang on the Tree, but ſoure in the juice, and of bad nouriſhment in the eating. They are, as one calls them wittily, *Nothing between two diſhes.* It were well if men could in their worldly hopes come but to the *unjuſt Stewards* reckoning, and for an *hundred* fictitious they promiſe themſelves from the enjoyments they purſue, find but *fifty* at laſt paid them: No alas, they muſt not look to come to ſo good a Market, or have ſuch fair dealings, that have to do with the creature, which will certainly put them to greater diſappointments than ſo. They may bleſs themſelves, if they pleaſe, for a while in their hopes, as the Husbandman ſometimes doth in the goodly ſhew that he hath of Corn ſtanding upon his ground; but by that

time they have reaped their Crop, and threshed out their hopes, they will find little besides straw and chaffe, emptiness and vanity to be left them: A poor return, God knows, to pay them for the expence of their time and strength which they have laid out upon them, much less suitable to recompence the loss he is put to in his conscience; for there are few who are greedy Hunters after the Worlds enjoyments, that do drive this their Worldly Trade without running in debt to their consciences. And I am sure, he buys Gold too dear, that pays the peace of his conscience for the purchase. But Heaven is had cheap, though it be with the loss of all our carnal interests, even life it self. Who will grutch to part with a sorry Lease of a low-rented Farm, in which he also hath but a few days left before it expires, (and such our temporal life is) for the perpetuity of such an inheritance as is to be had with the Saints in light? This hath ever made the faithful Servants of God carry their lives in their hands, willing to lay them down; *while they look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal,* ver. 18. of the fore-going *Chapter*.

3 *Thirdly*, As Hope assures the soul of the certainty and transcendency of Heavens Salvation, so also of the necessary subserviency, that his afflictions have towards his obtaining this Salvation; *Luke* 24. 26. *Ought not Christ to have suffered those things, and to enter into his glory?* As if Christ had said, What reason have you so to mourn, and take on for your Masters death, as if all your hopes were now split and spilt? Ought he not to suffer? Was there any other way that he could get Home, and take possession of his glory that waited for him in Heaven? And if you do not grutch him his preferment, never be so inordinately troubled to see him onwards to it, though through the deep and miry Lane of Suffering. And truly the Saints way to salvation, lies in the same Road that Christ went in; *Rom.* 8. 17. *If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together*; only with this advantage, that his going before hath beaten it plain, so that now it may be forded, which but for him had been utterly unpassable to us. Afflictions understood with this notion upon them, That they are as necessary for our waftage to glory, as water is to carry the Ship to her Port (which may as soon sayl without

without water, as a Saint land in Heaven, without the subserviency of afflictions) This notion I say, well understood, would reconcile the greatest afflictions to our thoughts, and make us delight to walk in their company. This knowledge *Parisiensis* calls *Unus de septem radiis doni scientiæ*, one of the seven beams of divine knowledge, for the want of which we call good evil, and evil good, think God blesseth us, when we are in the Sun-shine of prosperity, and curseth when our condition is over-cast with a few clouds of Adversity; but Hope hath an eye that can see Heaven in a cloudy day, and an Anchor that can find firm land under a weight of waters to hold by; it can expect good out of evil. The *Jews* open their Windows when it thunders and lightens, expecting (they say) their *Messiah* to come at such a time to them. I am sure, Hope opens her Window widest in a day of storm and tempest: *Zeph.* 3. 12. *I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in thee.* And *Micah* the 7th, *Therefore will I look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation, my God will hear me.* See what strong hold Hopes Anchor takes, and it is a remarkable *Therefore*, if you observe the place; because all things were at so desperate a pass in the Churches affairs, (as there you will find them to be to mans thinking) *therefore*, saith the Saint, *I will look, I will wait.* Indeed God doth not take the Axe into his hand to make Chips; his People, when he is hewing them, and the Axe goes deepest, they may expect some beautiful piece at the end of the work. It is a sweet meditation *Parisiensis* hath upon *Rom.* 8. 28. *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Ubi magis intrepida, magis pensata esse debes, quàm inter cooperarios meos, & coadjutores meos?* Where O my soul, shouldst thou be more satisfied, free of care and fear, than when thou art among thy fellow-labourers, and those that come to help thee to attain thy so-much-desired-Salvation, which thy afflictions do! They work together with Ordinances and other providential dealings of God for good, yea thy chief good; and thou couldst as ill spare their help as any other means which God appoints thee. Should one find, as soon as he riseth in the morning, some on his House-top rearing off the Tiles, and with Axes and Hammers taking down the roof thereof, he might at first be amazed and troubled at the sight, yea think they are a com-

company of thieves, and enemies come to do him some mischief; but when he understands they are work-men sent by his father to mend his House, and make it better than it is, (which cannot be done without taking some of it down) he is satisfied, and content to endure the present noyse and trouble, yea thankful to his father, for the care and cost he bestows on him: The very hope of what advantage will come of their work, makes him very willing to dwell a while amidst the ruines and rubbish of his old house. I do not wonder to see hopeless souls so impatient in their sufferings sometimes even to distraction of mind; alas, they fear presently (and have reason so to do) that they come to pull all their Worldly joys and comforts down about their ears, which gone, what alas have they left to comfort them, who can look for nothing but Hell in another World? But the believers heart is eased of all this, because assured from the promise, that they are sent on a better errand to him from his Heavenly Father, who intends him no hurt, but rather good, even to build the ruinous frame of his soul into a glorious Temple at last, and these afflictions come, among other means, to have a hand in the work; and this satisfies him, that he can say, Lord, cut and hew me how thou wilt, that at last I may be polisht and framed according to the Platform, which love hath drawn in thy heart for me. Though some ignorant man would think his cloaths spoyl'd when besmeared with Fullers Earth or Sope, yet one that knows the cleansing nature of them, will not be afraid to have them so used.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Wherein is shewed, *That God stays long before he performs some promises, and that it is Hopes Office then to keep the Christian in a waiting posture.*

THE fourth and last Office of Hope propounded, is, to quiet and compose the heart, when the good things of the promise (so much longed for by the Christian) stay long before they are performed. Patience, I told you, is the back on which the Christians burdens are carryed, and Hope the pillow between the back and the burden, to make it sit easie. Now Patience hath two shoulders; one to bear the present evil, and another to forbear the future good promised, but not yet paid. And as Hope makes the burden of the present evil of the cross light, so it makes the longest stay of the future good promised, short: Whereas without this, the Creature could have neither strength to bear the one, nor forbear and wait for the other; *Lam.* 3.18. *And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord*; implying thus much, That where there is no hope, there is no strength; the souls comfort lies drawing on, and soon gives up the ghost, where all hope fails. God undertook for *Israels* protection and provision in the Wilderness, but when their Dough was spent, and their store ended, which they brought out of *Egypt*, they fall foul with *God* and *Moses*; and why, but because their hope was spent as soon as their Dough? *Moses* ascends the Mount, and is but a few days out of their sight, and in all haste they must have a Golden Calf; and why, but because they gave him for lost, and never hoped to see him more. This is the reason why God hath so few Servants that will stick fast to him, because 4.

cauſe God puts them to wait for what he means to give, and moſt are ſhort-ſpirited, and cannot ſtay. You know what *Naomi* ſaid to her daughters, *Ruth* 1. 12, 13. *If I ſhould have a Husband, and ſhould alſo bear ſons, would you tarry for them till they were grown? would ye ſtay for them from having Husbands?* The promiſe hath Salvation in the Womb of it; but will the unbeliver, a ſoul without heavenly hope, ſtay till the promiſe ripens, and this happineſs be, as I may ſo ſay, grown up? No ſure, they will rather make ſome match with the beggarly creature, or any baſe luſt which will pay them in ſome pleaſure at preſent, than wait ſo long, though it be for Heaven it ſelf. Thus as *Tamar* play'd the Strumpet becauſe the Husband promiſed, was not given her ſo ſoon as ſhe deſired, *Gen.* 38. ſo it is the undoing of many ſouls, becauſe the comfort, joy, and bliſs of the promiſe is with-held at preſent, and his people are made to wait for their reward; therefore they throw themſelves into the embraces of this adulterous World that is preſent; *Demas hath forſaken me, and loved this preſent World*, 2 Tim. 4.10. The ſoul only that hath this divine hope, will be found patiently to ſtay for the good of the promiſe.

Now in handling this laſt Office of Hope, I ſhall do theſe three things.

1. I ſhall ſhew you, That God oft ſtays long before he pays in the good things of the promiſe.

2. That when God ſtays longeſt before he performs his promiſes, it is our duty to wait.

3. That Hope will enable the Soul to wait, when it ſtays longeſt.

SECT. I.

1. First. GOD often ſtays long before he fulfills his promiſe to his people. The promiſe contains the matter of all our hopes, called therefore *the hope of the promiſe*. To hope without a promiſe, is to claim a debt that never was owing. Now the good things of the promiſe, are not paid down preſently: indeed then there would not be ſuch uſe of promiſes. What need of a Bond,

Bond, where the money is presently paid down? God promised *Abraham* a Son, but he staid many years for him after the Bond of the promise was given him. He promised *Canaan* to him and his seed, yet hundreds of years interposed between the promise and performance. *Esau* was spread into a Kingdom, before the Heirs of promise had their inheritance, or one foot of land given them in it. Yea, all the *Patriarchs* who were the third generation after *Abraham*, *dyed, and received not the promise*, Hebr. 11. 13. *Simeon* had a promise he should *not see death, till he had seen the Lords Christ*, Luke 2. 26. but this was not performed till he had one foot in the grave, and was even taking his leave of the World. In a word, those promises which are the portion of all the Saints, and may be claim'd by one as well as by another: Their date is set in the book of Gods Decree, when to be paid in to a day; some sooner, some later; but not expressed in the promise. He hath engaged to answer the prayers of his people, and *fulfill the desires of those that fear him*, Psalme 145. 19. But it proves a long Voyage sometimes before the praying Saint hath the return of his adventure. There comes oft a long and sharp Winter between the sowing time of prayer, and the reaping. He hears us indeed as soon as we pray, but we oft do not hear of him so soon. Prayers are not long on their journey to heaven, but long a coming thence in a full answer. Christ at this day in heaven, hath not a full answer to some of those prayers which he put up on earth: Therefore he is said *to expect till his enemies be made his foot-stool*, Heb. 10. 13. Promises we have for the subduing Sin and Satan under our feet, yet we finde these enemies still skulking within us, and many a sad scuffle we have with them before they are routed and outed our hearts. And so of others; we may find sometime the Christian, as great an Heir as he is to joy and comfort, hardly able to shew a penny of this Heavenly Treasure in his Purse. And for want of well pondering this one Clause, poor souls are oft led into temptation, even to question their Saint-ship. Such promises are the Saints portion, saith one, but I cannot find them perform'd to me, therefore I am none of them; many a prayer I have sent to heaven, but I hear no news of them. The Saints are Conquerors over their lusts, but I am yet often foyled and worsted by mine: There is a heaven of comfort in the promise, but I am as it were

in the belly of Hell, swallowed up with fears and terrors; Such as these are the reasonings of poor souls in the distress of their spirits; whereas all this trouble they put themselves to might be prevented, if they had faith to believe this one principle of undoubted truth; That God performes not his promises all at once, and what they want in hand, they may see on the way coming to them.

SECT. II.

2 Secondly. WHen God stays long before he makes payment of the promise, then it is the believers duty to wait for it; *Habak.* 2. *Though it tarry, wait for it*: he is speaking there of the good of the promise, which God intended to perform in the appointed time; and because it might tarry longer than their hasty hearts would, he bids them wait for it. As one that promiseth to come to a friends house, sends him word to sit up for him, though he tarry later than ordinary, for he will come at last assuredly. This is hard work indeed! What? Wait? When we have stay'd so long, and no sight of Gods coming, after this Prayer, and that Sermon; so many long looks given at the Window of his Ordinances and Providences, and no tydings to be heard of his approach in mercy and comfort to my Soul, and after this, still am I bid wait? This is wearisome work. True, to flesh and blood it is; yea, weak faith is oft out of breath, and prone to sit down, or turn back, when it hath gone long to meet God in the returns of his mercy, and misseth of him; and therefore the *Apostle* ushers in this duty with an affectionate prayer, 2 *Thes.* 3. 5. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* He had lay'd down a strong ground of consolation for them in the precedent Chapter, in that *they were chosen to salvation*, and *called by the Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Ver. 13. 14. and assured them, that *God who is faithful, would establish them, and keep them from evil*, Ver. 5. of this Chapter: He means so as they should not miscarry, and at last fall short of the glory promised: But being sensible how difficult a work it was for them amidst their own present weaknesses, the

Apo-

Apostacies of others, and the assaults of Satan upon themselves, to hold fast the assurance of their hope unto the end, he turns himself from them to speak to God for them, *The Lord direct your hearts*; and, as if he had said, 'tis a way you will never find, a work you will never be able of your selves thus to wait patiently till Christ come, and bring the full reward of the promise with him. The Lord therefore direct your hearts into it. And *Moses* it seems, before he ascended the Mount, had a fear and jealousie of what afterward proved too true; that the *Israelites* unbelieving hearts would not have the patience to wait for his return, when he should stay some while with God there out of their sight; to prevent which, he gave expres command before he went up, That *they should tarry there for him*, Exod. 24. 14. Indeed a duty more contrary, than this of waiting quietly and silently on God, to our proud hearts, I know not. We can make the great God bear our manners, and lacquy after us, before we do what he commands, but if the promise comes not Galloping full-speed to us, we think it will never be at us.

Quest. *But, why doth God, when he hath made a promise, make his people stay so long?*

Answ. I shall answer this question by asking another: Why doth God make any promise at all to his creature? This may be well asked, considering how free God was from owing any such kindness to his creature, till, by the meer good pleasure of his Will, he put himself into Bonds, and made himself, by his promise, a Debtor to his Elect; And this proves the former question to be saucy and over-bold. As if some great rich man should make a poor beggar, that is a stranger to him, his Heir, and when he tells him this, he should ask, But why must I stay so long for it? Truly, any time is too soon for him to receive a mercy from God, that thinks Gods time in sending it too late. This hasty spirit is as grievous to God, as his stay can be to us. And no wonder God takes it so heinously, if we consider the bitter root that bears it.

First, It proceeds from a selfishness of spirit, whereby we prefer our own content and satisfaction, before the glory of God, and this becomes not a gracious soul. Our comfort flows in by the performance of the promise, but the revenue of Gods honour is paid in to him, by our humble waiting on him in the interval

between the promise and the performance, and is the main end why he forbears the paying it in hastily. *Jacob* served seven years for *Rachel*; and God sure may better make us wait, before the promise is given in to our embraces by the full accomplishment of it; *Hebr.* 10. 36. *Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the promise.* It is very fit the Master should Dine before the man; and if we could not like a servant that would think much to stay so long from his meal, as is required at his hands for waiting at his Masters Table; how much more must God dislike the rudeness of our impatient spirits, that would be set at our meal, and have our turn served in the comfort of the promise, before he hath the honour of our waiting on him!

2 *Secondly*, It proceeds from deep ingratitude, and this is a sin odious to God and man; *Psal.* 106. 13. *They soon forgat his Works, and waited not for his counsel.* God was not behind hand with this people. It was not so long since he had given them an experiment of his power and truth, he had but newly lent them his hand, and led them dry-shod through a Sea, with which they seemed to be much confirmed in their faith, and enlarged in their acknowledgements, when they came safe to shore, *Ver.* 12. *Then believed they his words, they sang his praises.* One would have thought Gods credit now would have gone for a great Summe with them ever after: but it proved nothing so, they dare not trust God with so much as their Bill of fare, what they shall eat and drink; and therefore it is said, *They waited not for his counsel, but lusted exceedingly in the Wilderness.* That is, they prevented the wisdom and providence of God, which would have provided well for them, if they could but have stay'd to see how God would have spread their Table for them. And why all this haste? *They forgat his works.* They had lost the thankful sence of what was past, and therefore cannot wait for what was to come.

Sect. III.

Thirdly. HOpe will enable the soul to wait when the promise stays longest; it is the very nature of Hope so to do. 3. *Lament.* 3. 26. *It is good for a man to hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.* Hope groans, when the mercy promised comes not, but does not grumble. Hopes groans are from the Spirit sighed out to God in prayer, *Rom.* 8.26. and these lighten the soul of its burden of fear and solicitous care; whereas the groans of a hopeless soul are vented in discontented passions against God, and these are like a loud wind to a fire, that makes it rage more; *Jerem.* 25. 16. *They shall drink, and be moved, and be mad because of the Sword that I shall send among them.* It is spoken of the enemies of God and his people. God had prepared them a draught, which should have strange effects, *They should be moved.* As a man, whose brains disturb'd with strong drink, is restless and unquiet, yea, *be mad*; as some, when they are drunk, quarrel with every one they meet: So should their hearts be filled with rage even against God himself, who runs his Sword into their sides, because they had no hope to look for any healing of their wounds at his hand. But now where there is hope, the heart is soon quieted and pacified. Hope is the Hankercheif that God puts into his peoples hands to wipe the teares from their eyes, which their present troubles, and long stay of expected mercies, draw from them; *Jer.* 31. 16, 17. *Refraine thy voyce from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy, and there is hope in the end.* This with some other comfortable promises, which God gave his Prophet *Jeremiah* in a Vision, did so over-run and fill his heart with joy, that *Ver.* 26. he was as much recruted and comforted, as a sick or weary man is after a night of sweet sleep; *Ver.* 26. *Upon this I waked, and my sleep was sweet unto me.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Sheweth, *A threefold assurance which* Hope *gives the Christian, and thereby quiets him in waiting for the performance of promises, when God stays long.*

OPE pacifies the Christian with a threefold assurance, when the promise seems to stay long.

1. Hope assures the soul, that though God stays a while before he performs the promise, yet he doth not delay.

2. That when he comes, he will abundantly recompence his longest stay.

3. That while he stays to perform one promise, he will leave the comfort of another promise to bear the Christian company in the absence of that.

SECT. I.

1. *First.* HOpe assures the soul, that God will not delay, though he may stay; *Hab.* 2. 3. *The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lye; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* How is this? Though it tarry, it will not tarry! How shall we reconcile this tarrying, and not tarrying? Very well. Though the promise tarries till the appointed time, yet it will not tarry beyond it. *When the time of the promise drew nigh* (it is said) *which God had sworn to* Abraham, *the people grew and multiplied in* Egypt, *Acts* 7. 17. As the Herbs and Flowers which sleep all Winter in their roots under-ground without any mention

of

of them; when the time of Spring approacheth, presently they start forth of their beds, where they had lain so long unperceiv'd. Thus will the promise in its season do: He delays, who passeth the time appointed: But he only stays, that waits for the appointed time, and then comes. Every promise is dated, but with a mysterious Character; and for want of skill in Gods Cronology, we are prone to think God forgets us, when indeed we forget our selves in being so bold to set God a time of our own, and in being angry that he comes not just then to us. As if a man should set his Watch by his own hungry stomack, rather than by the Sun, and then say 'tis Noon, and chide because his Dinner is not ready. We are over-greedy of comfort, and expect the promise should keep time with our hasty desires, which because it doth not, we are discontented: A high piece of folly! The Sun will not go the faster, for setting our Watch forward; nor the promise come the sooner, for our antedating it. It is most true, what one saith, Though God seldom comes at our day, because we seldom reckon right; yet he never fails his own day. That of the *Apostle* is observable, 2 *Thess.* 2. 2, 3. He exhorts the *Thessalonian* Church there, That they *would not be shaken in minde, or be troubled, as that the day of Christ were at hand.* But what need of this Exhortation to Saints, that look for their greatest joy to come with the approach of that day? Can their hearts be troubled, to hear the day of their Redemption draws nigh, the day of refreshing is at hand? It was not therefore, I conceive, the coming of that day, which was so unpleasing and affrighting, but the time in which some Seducers would have perswaded them to expect it, as if it had been at the very doors, and would presently have surprized them in their generation; which had been very sad indeed, because then it should have come before many prophesies and promises had received their accomplishment, and by that means the Truth of God would have gone off the Stage with a slur; which must not, shall not be, as he tells them, *Ver.* 3. *For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the Sonne of Perdition.* And as that promise stays but till those intermediate truths which have a shorter period, be fulfilled, and then it comes without any possible stay or stop: So do all the rest, but wait till their reckoning be out, and what God hath appointed to intervene be dispatcht,

ſpatcht, and they punctually ſhall have their delivery in their ſet time. Thou art, may be, bleeding under a wounded ſpirit, a poor broken-hearted creature, that lieſt ſteeping in thy tears for ſin. The promiſe tells thee, that God is nigh to revive thee, thee I ſay by name, *Iſa.* 57. 15. yet thou comeſt from this prayer, and that Sermon, but haſt no ſight of him, nor canſt hear more news of his coming than what the promiſe gives thee. Look now that God ſuffers no prejudice by his ſtay in thy thoughts, but conclude that his time is not come, or elſe he had been ere this with thee; and take heed of meaſuring Gods miles by thy own Scale, for his nigh may be thy farre. God could have told his people the time when he meant to come with the performance of every promiſe, as eaſily as ſet it down in his own purpoſe, but he hath concealed it in moſt, as an happy advantage to our faith, whereby we may more fully expreſs our confidence in waiting for that which we know not when we ſhall receive. *Abrahams* faith was great and ſtrong to follow God when he concealed the place he meant to lead him to, for *he went he knew not whither*, Heb. 11. 8. So it requires great faith to reſt ſatisfied with the promiſe when the time of payment is hid. But if we conſider who we Trade with, we can have no reaſon to be the leaſt jealous, no not when he ſtays longeſt, that he will fail or delay us a moment longer than the ſet time of the promiſe. There are three cauſes men break their times of payment, and come not at their day.

1. Firſt, Forgetfulneſs; many remember not what they promiſe. The day comes, and it is quite out of their minds. Men ſeldom forget when they are to receive, but too oft when they are to pay debts. An extraordinary occaſion muſt be ſent to rub up the *Butlers* memory, or elſe hee'l never think of his priſon promiſe. But Gods promiſe is never out of his thoughts, *He remembers his Covenant*, Pſal. 105. 8. his people and their affairs are *engraven on the palms of his hand, and their Walls are alwayes before him*, Iſa. 49. 16. Though the preferment of *Pharaohs* Court made the *Butler* forget his promiſe to *Joſeph*, yet all the glory that Chriſt ſees and enjoys in Heaven, hath not the power to blot the remembrance of his promiſe to his people who lie in chains of affliction here below. And God would have his Saints take notice of this to comfort themſelves with, while he comes,

comes. *I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end*, Jer. 29.41.

2. Unfaithfulness: A promise with some, is no more than a Collar on an Apes neck, you have them not awhit the faster by it, for they can slip off the obligation at their pleasure. May be they never intended performance, when they passed it, but made use of a promise only as a Key, to lock up their intention of deceiving from your present knowledge. Others haply mean at present as they say, but soon grow sick of their engagement, upon sight of some disadvantage which their after-thoughts discover likely to befall them upon the performance, and therefore their wits are set awork to coyn some handsome evasion to delude the engagement, or at least delay the payment; which made *Lysander* say of some men, That they play'd with Oaths and Promises, *sicut pueri cum astragalis*, as children do at Nine Pins: They will keep them if they can get by the performance; but if it be like to prove a losing Game, they'l rather run in debt to their conscience by breaking them, than to their Purse, or any other Worldly interest, by their performance. But no fear of God in this matter; his name is Truth and Faithfulness. Now can Truth it self lye, or Faithfulness deceive? *In my Fathers house* (saith Christ) *are many Mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again and receive you*, John 14. 2, 3. See here the candor and nakedness of our Saviours heart: As if he had said; This is no shift to be gone, that so I may by a fair Tale, leave you in hopes of that which shall never come to pass. No, did I know it otherwise than I speak, my heart is so full of love to you, that it would not have suffered me to have put such a cheat upon you for a thousand Worlds; you may trust me to go; for as surely as you see me go, shall your eyes see me come again to your everlasting joy; the promises are none of them yea and nay, but yea and Amen in him.

Secondly, He is Wisdome, as well as Truth. As he is Truth, he cannot wrong or deceive us in breaking his Word; and being Wisdome, it is impossible he should promise that which should prejudice himself; and therefore he makes no blots in his purposes or promises, but what he doth in either is immutable. Repen-

tance is indeed an act of wisdome in the Creature; but it presupposeth folly, which is incompatible to God. In a word, men too oft are rash in promising, and therefore what they in haste promise, they perform at leisure; they consider not before they vow, and therefore enquire afterward, Whether they had best stand to it: But the allwise God needs not this after-game; as in the Creation he lookt back upon the several pieces of that goodly frame, and saw them so exact, that he took not up his pencil the second time to mend any thing of the first draught; so in his promises, they are made with such infinite judgement and wisdome, that what he hath writ, he will stand to for ever; *Hosea* 2. 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee to me in righteousnes and in judgement.* Therefore for ever, because in righteousnes and in judgement.

3. From impotency; Mens promises, alas, depend upon many contingences. The man haply is rich when he seals the bond, and poor before the day of payment comes about; a wrack at sea, a fire by land, or some other sad accident intervenes, that either quite impoverisheth him, or necessitates him to beg further time, with him in the Gospel, *Matth.* 18. *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all*; but the great God cannot be put into such streights; *The strength of Israel will not lye*, 1 Sam. 15. 29. As there is a lye of wickednes, when one promiseth what he will not perform; so there is a lye that proceeds from weakness, when a person or thing cannot perform what they promise. Thus indeed all men, yea all creatures will be found lyars to those that lean on them; called therefore *lying vanities*. Vanities, as empty and insufficient; lying vanities, because they promise what they have not to give; but God he is propounded as a sure bottom for our faith to rest on in this respect, *Trust in the Lord, for in Jehovah is strength, strength*, or *everlasting strength*, Isa. 26. Such strength his is as needs not anothers strength to uphold it. One mans ability to perform his promises, leans on others ability to pay theirs to him; if they fail him, he is forced to fail them. Thus we see, The breaking of one Merchant proves the breaking of many others whose Estates were in his hands. But Gods power is independent. Let the whole Creation break, yet God is the same he was, as able to help as ever; *Though the fig-tree shall not blossome, neither shall fruit be in the Vines:*

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And, *Yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation; the Lord God is my ſtrength*, Hab. 3. 17, 18. O how happy are the Saints! a people that can never be undone, no not when the whole World turns banckrupt, becauſe they have his promiſe, whoſe power fails not when that doth. The Chriſtian cannot come to God when he hath not by him what he wants; *How great is thy loving-kindneſs which thou haſt laid up for thoſe that fear thee*! Pſal. 31. 'tis laid up, as a father hath his childs portion in bags, ready to be paid him when the time comes. The Saint ſhall not ſtay a moment beyond the date of the promiſe. *There is forgiveneſs with thee* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) it ſtands ready for thee againſt thou comeſt to claim the promiſe.

Sect. II.

Secondly. HOpe aſſures the Chriſtian, that though God ſtayes long, yet he will at laſt make an abundant recompence for the ſame, when he comes to perform his promiſe. As the wicked get nothing by Gods forbearing to execute his threatning, but the treaſuring up more wrath againſt the day of wrath: So the Saints loſe nothing by not having the promiſe preſently paid into them, but rather do, by their forbearing God a while, treaſure up more joy againſt the joyful day, when the promiſe ſhall be performed; *Rom.* 2. 7. *To them who by patient continuance ſeek for glory and honour, eternal life.* Mark, it is not enough to do well, but to *continue* therein, nor that neither, except it be *patient continuing in well-doing*, in the midſt of Gods ſeeming delays; and whoever he be that can do this, ſhall be rewarded at laſt for all his patience. Ploughing is hungry work, yet becauſe it is in hope of reaping ſuch an abundant encreaſe, the Husbandman faints not. O my ſoul (ſaith Hope) though thou wanteſt thy Dinner, hold but out a while, and thou ſhalt have Dinner and Supper ſerved in together when night comes: The ſick fits and qualms which the Chriſtian hath in the abſence of the promiſe, are all forgot, and the trouble of them over, when once it comes, and he is feaſted with the joy it brings; *Prov.* 13. 12.

12. *Hope deferred, makes the ſoul ſick; but when the deſire cometh, it is a tree of life*: That is, when it cometh in Gods time after long waiting, then it cauſeth an over-flowing joy. As there is a time, which God hath ſet for the ripening the fruits of the earth, before which if they be gathered, it is to our loſs: So there is a time ſet by God for the good things of the promiſe, which we are to wait for, and not unſeaſonably, pluck them, like green Apples, off the Tree, as too many do, who having no faith or hope to quiet their ſpirits while Gods time comes, do therefore ſnatch that by unwarrantable means, which would in time drop ripe into their boſomes: And what get theſe ſhort-ſpirited men by their haſte? Alas, they find their enjoyments thin and lank, like Corn reaped before 'tis fit for the Sickle, *wherewith he that bindeth the ſheaves, filleth not his boſome.* Therefore we find this duty of waiting preſs't under this very Metaphor, *Jam.* 5: 7. *Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.* Stay Gods time, till he comes according to his promiſe, and takes you off your ſuffering work, and be not haſty to ſhift your ſelves out of trouble: And why ſo? *Behold the Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, untill he receives the early and latter raine; be ye alſo patient, ſtabliſh your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.* The Husbandman (who the Proverb ſaith, is, *Dives in novum annum*, rich in hope of the next years Crop) though he gladly would have his Corn in the Barn, yet waits for its ripening in the ordinary courſe of Gods providence; when the former raine comes he is joyful, but yet deſires the latter raine alſo, and ſtays for it, though long in coming. And do not we ſee, that a ſhowre ſometimes falls cloſe to the time of Harveſt, that plumps the eare to the great encreaſe of the Crop, which ſome loſe, that through diſtruſt of providence put in their Sickle too ſoon? I am ſure mercies come fulleſt, when moſt waited for. Chriſt did not ſo ſoon ſupply them with Wine at the Marriage of *Cana*, as his Mother deſired, but they had the more for ſtaying a while. There is a double fulneſs, which the Chriſtian may hope to find in thoſe enjoyments that he hath with long patience waited for, above another that cannot ſtay Gods leiſure.

1. A fulneſs of duration. Enjoyments ſnatcht out of Gods hand, and not given by it, are but Gueſts come not to ſtay long; like

like *Davids* child born in adultery, they commonly die in the Cradle: They are like some fruit gather'd green, which soon rots. Is it riches that is thus got? Some are said to *make haste to be rich*, Prov. 28. 20. They cannot by a conscionable diligence in their particular calling, and exercise of godliness in their general, wait upon God; no, the promise doth not gallop fast enough for them; on therefore they spurre, and by sordid practises make haste to be rich. But God makes as much haste to melt their estate, as they do to gather. No Salt will keep that meat long from corrupting, which was over-heated in the driving: nor any care and providence of man keep that estate from Gods curse, which is got by so hot and sinful a pursuit; *Prov.* 13. 11. *Wealth gotten by vanity* (that is, vain, unwarrantable courses) *it shall be diminished.* Like the unsound fat, which great Drinkers, and greedy Eaters gain to themselves, it hath that in it, that will hasten its ruine; *Prov.* 21. 6. *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death:* The meaning is, such Estates are tossed like a Ball, from one to another, and are not like to stay long in any hand, till it comes into the godly mans, whom God oft, by his providence, makes Heir to such mens riches, as you may see *Job* 22. 17. *Eccles.* 2. 26. *Again*, Is it comfort and inward joy? Some make too much haste for this; They are not like other Christians, who use to have a wet seed time, and are content to wait for joy till Harvest, or at least, till it be in some forwardness, and the seed of grace which was sown in tears of Humiliation, appears above ground in such solid evidences, as do in some degree satisfie them concerning the reality and truth of the same. Then indeed the sincere Christians spirit begins to cheer up, and his comfort holds, yea encreaseth more and more, as the Sun that after a contest with some thick mist, breaks forth, and gets a full victory of those vapours which for a while darkned it; *Prov.* 13. 9. *The light of the righteous rejoyceth*; that is, over all his fears and doubts. But there are others so hasty, that they are catching at comfort, before ever they were led into acquaintance with godly sorrow. They are delivered without pain, and their faith flames forth into the joy of assurance, before any smoak of doubtings and fears were seen to arise in their hearts: but alas, it is as soon lost as got, like too forward a snibing Spring, that makes the Husbandman

weep

weep at Harveſt: Or a fair Sun-ſhine day in Winter, that is the breeder of many foul ones after it. The ſtony ground is a cleat inſtance for this, *Mark* 4. whoſe joy was as quickly down as up. A ſtorm of Perſecution or temptation comes, and immediately he is offended. In a word, take but one inſtance more, and that is in point of deliverance. Such haſty ſpirits that cannot wait for the promiſe to open their priſon door, and God to give them a releaſe in his time, but break priſon, and by ſome unwarrantable practice winde themſelves out of trouble, do we not ſee how miſerably they befool themſelves? For while they think, by the midwifry of their ſinful policy, to haſten their deliverance, they kill it in the birth, which had it come in Gods time, might have ſtaid many a fair day with them. The *Jews* are a ſad inſtance for this, who though God gave them ſuch full ſecurity for their deliverance from the *Babylonian* hand, would yet take their own courſe, hoping, it ſeems, to compaſs it ſooner by policy, than they could expect it to be effected by providence, and therefore to *Egypt* they will poſt in all haſte, not doubting but they ſhall thence bring their deliverance; but alas, it proved far otherwiſe; for all they got, was to have more links added to their Chain of Bondage, and their Lordly Maſters to uſe greater rigour upon them; which God by his Prophet, bids them thank their own haſty, unbelieving ſpirits for; *Iſa.* 30. 15. *Thus ſaith the Lord God, the holy one of Iſrael, In returning and reſt ſhall ye be ſaved; in quietneſs and confidence ſhall be your ſtrength, and ye would not.* Indeed if we look on ſuch as have quietly waited by Hope for Gods coming to their help, we ſhall find they ever ſped well. *Joſhuah*, who bore up againſt all diſcouragements from God and man, ſtedfaſtly believing, and patiently waiting for the Land God had promiſed, did he not live to walk over their graves in the Wilderneſs, that would have turn'd back to *Egypt?* and to be witneſs to their deſtruction alſo, who preſumptuouſly went up the Hill to fight the Enemy, and take the Land (as they vainly hoped) before Gods time was come, *Deut.* 1. Yea, did not he at laſt divide the Land, and lay his bones in a bed of honour, after he had lived to ſee the promiſe of God happily perform'd to his people? So *David*, whoſe hope and patience was admirable in waiting for the Kingdom, after he had the promiſe of it; eſpecially if we conſider what fair opportunities he had to take cruel

Saul

Saul out of the way, whose life alone did stand betwixt him and the Throne; neither did he want matter to fill up a Declaration for the satisfaction and pacifying the minds of the people, if he had a mind to have gone this way to the Crown; but he knew those plausible Arguments for such a Fact, which would have pleased the multitude, would not have pacified his own conscience, and this staid his hand from any such ripping open the womb of the promise, to come by the Crown, with which it was big, but left it to go its full time, and he lost nothing by it.

2. There flows in a fulness of benediction with an enjoyment reaped in Gods full time, which is lost for want of patience to wait thereunto. Now this benediction is paid in to the waiting souls bosome these two ways. *First*, He hath that enjoyment sweetned to him with Gods love and favour for his comfort. *Secondly*, He hath it sanctified to him in the happy fruit it bears, for his good.

First, He hath it sweetned to him with the love and favour of God for his comfort, which he cannot so well expect that carves for himself; and cannot stay for God in his own time to lay it on his Trencher. There is guilt ever to be found in the company of impatience and distrust; and where guilt is contracted in the getting of an enjoyment, there can be little sweetness tasted when it comes to be used. O guilt is an imbittering thing, it keeps the soul in a continual fear of hearing ill news from heaven; and a soul in fear, is not in case to relish the sweetness of a mercy. Such a one may haply have a little tumultuous joy, and warm himself a while at this rash fire of his own kindling, till he comes to have some serious discourse with his own heart in cold blood, about the way and manner of getting the enjoyment, and this is sure to send such a dampness to the heart of the poor creature, as will not suffer that fire long to burn clear. O what a stab is it to the heart of an Oppressour, to say of his great Wealth, as that King of his Crown, Here is a fair estate, but God knows how I came by it! What a wound to the joy of a hypocrite! I have pretended to a great deal of comfort, but God knows how I came by it! Whereas the Christian, who receives any comfort, inward or outward from Gods hand, as a return of his patient waiting, he hath none of these sad thoughts to scare him and break his

his draught when the Cup is at his mouth. He knows where he had his outward estate, and inward comfort; he can bring God to vouch them both, that they are with his leave and liking. There is a great odds between the joy of the Husbandman, at the happy inning of his Corn in Harvest, and the Thieves joy, who hath stoln some sheaves out of anothers Field, and is making merry with his Booty as soon as he is got home: Possibly, you may hear a greater noyse and outis of joy in the Thiefs House, than the Honest Husbandmans, yet no compare between them. One knock at the Thiefs Door by an Officer that comes to search his House for stoln goods, spoyles the mirth of the whole House, who run one this way, and another that; O what fear and shame must then take hold on his guilty heart, that hears God coming to search for his stoln mercies and comforts?

2 *Secondly*, The waiting soul hath enjoyments sanctified to him for his good, and this another wants with all he hath. And what is the blessing of mercy, but to have it do us good? Hasty spirits grow worse by enjoyments gather'd out of season. This is a sore evil indeed, to have Wealth for our hurt, and comfort for our hurt. It was the sin of *Israel*, *they waited not for his counsel*, Psal. 106. 13. God had taken them as his charge, and undertook to provide for them if they would have stood to his allowance; but they could not stay his leisure, but *lusted exceedingly in the wilderness*, *and tempted God in the Desert*, Verse 14. They must have what pleaseth their Palate, and when their own impatient hearts call, or not at all; and so they had, *He gave them their request*, Ver. 15. but they had better have been without their Feast, for they did not thrive by it, *He sent leanness into their souls*, Ver. 15. a secret curse came with their enjoyments, which soon appeared in those great sinnes they thereupon were left to commit, Ver. 16. *They envied* Moses *also in the Camp*, *and* Aaron *the Saint of the Lord*; as also the heavy judgements by which God did testifie against them for the same, *Numb.* 11. 31. whereas mercies that are received in Gods way and time, prove meat of better juice and purer nourishment to the waiting soul; they do not break out into such botches and plague-sores as these; as the other are fuel for lust, so these food to the Saints graces, and make them more humble and holy: See this in *Isa.* 30. 18, 19. compared with *Ver.* 22. where, they

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as a fruit of their patient waiting on God for their outward deliverance, have with it, that which is more worth than the deliverance it self, *i.e.* grace to improve and use it holily. It was a great mercy that *Hannah* had, after her many prayers and long waiting, a son; but a greater, that she had a heart to give up her son again to God, that gave him to her. To have estate, health, or any other enjoyment upon waiting on God for the same, is mercy, but not to be compared with that blessing which seasons and sanctifies the heart to use them for Gods glory. And this is the ordinary portion of the waiting soul, and that not only in outward comforts, but inward also: The joy and inward peace which the sincere soul hath thus, makes it more humble, holy, heavenly; whereas the comfort which the Hypocrite comes so quickly by, either degenerates into pride and self-conceit, or empties it self into some other filthy sink, sometimes even of open profaness it self, before it hath run farre

Sect. III.

Thirdly. HOpe assures the soul, that while God stays the performance of one promise, he shall have the absence thereof supplied with the presence of another. And this is enough to quiet the heart of any that understands himself. God hath laid things in such a sweet method, that there is not one point of time, wherein the soul of a believer is left wholly destitute of comfort, but there is one promise or other that stands ready to minister unto his present wants. Sometimes haply he may want what he strongly desires, yet even then care is taken for his present subsistence; one promise bears the Christian company while another comes. And what cause hath the sick man to complain, though all his friends do not sit up with him together; if they take it by turns, and never leave him without a sufficient number to look to him? We read of a *Tree of Life*, Rev. 22. 2. which *bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month*: so that it is never without some hanging on it which is fit for the Eater. What can this Tree be better conceived to 3.

be than Christ, who yields all manner of fruit in his promises, and comfort for all times, all conditions. The believer can never come, but he shall find some promise ripe to be eaten, with which he may well stay his stomack, till the other (whose time to be gather'd, is not yet come) hangs for further ripening. Here you see the Christian hath provision for all the year long. When Christ return'd to Heaven, he gave his Disciples this to comfort them, *that he would come again, and carry them with him unto his Fathers House*, where now he lives himself in glory, *John* 14. 2. This is sweet indeed; but alas, what shall they do in the mean time to weather out those many storms, which were to intervene between this promise, and the time when it shall be performed! This also our Saviour considered, and tells them, he does not mean to leave them comfortless, but gives them another promise to keep House with in the mean time, *i. e.* a promise of his Spirit, who should be with them on earth, *John* 14. 16. while he took them to be with him in Heaven. The Christian is never at such a loss, wherein Hope cannot relieve it. *Jer.* 17. 7, 8, *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is; for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* These waters are the promises, from which the believer draws continual matter of comfort, that as a tree planted by the River, flourisheth, however the year goes, so doth he, whatever the temper of Gods exteriour providence is. Possibly the Christian is in an afflicted state, and the promise for deliverance comes not, yet then hope can entertain him in the absence of that, at the cost of another promise; that though God doth not at present deliver out of the affliction, yet he will support him under it, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. if yet the Christian cannot find this promise paid in to such a heigth, as to discharge him of all impatience, distrust, and other sinful distempers (which to his grief he finds too busie in him for all the promise) then Hope hath another Window to let out the smoak at; and that is by presenting the soul with those promises which assure the weak Christian, that pardoning mercy shall cover those defects, which assisting grace did not fully conquer; *Mal.* 3. 17. *I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*

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So *Micah* 7. 18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage?* And certainly God would not have ſuffered ſo much impatience to have broke out in *Job*, but that he would have ſomething left for pardoning mercy to do at the cloſe of all, to which that holy man ſhould ſee himſelf beholden, both for his deliverance, and that honourable teſtimony alſo which God himſelf gave of him before his uncharitable Friends, who from his great afflictions, and ſome diſcompoſure of ſpirit in them, did ſo unmercifully burthen him with the heavy charge of being an Hypocrite.

CHAP. VIII.

Contains a tryal of what mettal our Helmet of Hope is made of.

FOR Tryal, Whether we have this Helmet of Hope on our heads or no; This Helmet, I ſay, commended to us in the Text. As for ſuch paltry Ware, that moſt are contented with for cheapneſs-ſake, it alas deſerves not the name of a true hope, no more than a Paper-Cap doth of a Helmet. O look to the mettal and temper of your Helmet in an eſpecial manner; for at this moſt blows are made. He that ſeeks chiefly to defend his own head (the *Serpent*, I mean) will aim moſt to wound yours. None but fools and children are ſo credulous, as to be blown up with great hopes, upon any light occaſion, and ſlight ground. They who are wiſe, and have their wits about them, will be as wary how they place their hopes, eſpecially for Salvation, as a prudent Pilot, that hath a rich lading, would be where he moares his Ship, and caſts his Anchor. There is reaſon for our utmoſt care herein, becauſe nothing expoſeth men to more ſhame, than to meet with diſap- *Uſe 1.*

pointment in their hopes; *Job* 6. 20. *They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither and were ashamed*; i.e. to miss of what they hoped to have found in those Brooks. But no shame like to that which a false hope for eternal salvation, will put sinners to at last; *Some shall rise to shame everlasting*, Dan. 12. They shall awake out of their graves, and out of that Tools Paradise also, wherein their vain hopes had entertain'd them all their lives; and see instead of a Heaven they expected, Hell to be in expectation of them, and gaping with full mouth for them. If the servants of *Eglon* were so ashamed after their waiting a while at their Princes door (from whom they expected all their preferment) to find him and their hopes with him dead on the floore, *Judg.* 3. 25. O whose heart then can think what a mixture of shame and horrour shall meet in their faces and hearts at the great day, who shall see all their hopes for Heaven hop headless, and leave them in the hands of tormenting Devils to all eternity! *Hannibal's* Souldiers did not so confidently divide the Goldsmiths shops in *Rome* among themselves (which yet they never took) as many presumptuous sinners do promise themselves Heavens bliss and happiness, who must instead thereof sit down with shame in Hell, except they can, before they die, shew better ground for their hope, than now they are able to do. O what will these fond Dreamers do in the day of the Lords anger, when they shall see the whole world in a light flame round about them, and hear God (whose piercing eyes will look them through and through) calling them forth before men and Angels, to the Scrutiny! Will they then stand to their hope, and vouch it to the face of Christ, which now they bless themselves so in! surely their hearts will fail them for such an enterprize. None then will speak so ill of them, as their own consciences shall do; God will in that day use their own tongues to accuse them, and set forth the folly of their ridiculous hope to the confusion of their faces before all the world. The *Prophet* foretells a time, when *the false Prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, neither shall they weare a rough garment to deceive, but he shall say, I am no Prophet, I am an Husbandman, &c.* Zech. 13. 4, 5. Truly, the most notorious false Prophet that the world hath, and deceives most, is this vain hope, which men take up for their Salvation. This propheſies of peace, pardon, and Heaven;

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to be the portion of such, as never once entred into Gods heart to make heirs thereof; but the day is coming, and it hastens, wherein this false Prophet shall be confounded; then the Hypocrite shall confess he never had any hope for Salvation, but what was the Idol of his own fancies making; and the Formalist shall throw off the garment of his profession by which he deceived himself and others, and appear to himself and all the world in his naked colours. It behoves therefore every one to be strict and curious in the search of his own heart, to find what his hope is built upon.

Now Hope of the right make is a rational well grounded hope; *1 Pet. 3. 15. be ready alway to give an answer to every man that asketh your reason of the hope that is in you.* Alas, how can they give an answer to others, that have not any to give to their own consciences to this question, Why dost thou hope to be saved O my soule? There is no Christian be he never so weak in grace, but hath some reason bottom'd on the Scripture (for other I mean not) for the hope he professeth. Do you think, yea can you be so absurd as to think your own bold presumption without any word of Promise to build upon, can intitle your souls to the inheritance in Gods Kingdom? should one come and say your house and land were his, and shew no writing under your hand by which you did ever grant him a right thereunto, but all he can say, is, he dreamt the last night that your house and land was his, and therefore now he demands it, would you not think the man mad, and had more right to the Bedlam than to your estate? And yet there are many hope to be saved, that can give no better reason than this comes to for the same, and such are all grossely ignorant and prophane sinners. As it is enough for a Saint to end the trouble which his fears put him into, to ask his soul why he is disquieted within him, would he but observe how little reason his heart can give for the same; so to dismount the bold sinner from his prancing hopes, if he might be prevailed with to call himself to an account and thus to accost his soule sometimes, and resolve not to stir without a Satisfactory answer; In sober sadnesse tel me O my soul, what reason findest thou in the whole Bible, for thee to hope for salvation, who livest in ignorance of God, or a trade of sin against God? certainly he should find his soul as mute and speech lesse as the man without the wedding garment was at Christs question. This is

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the reaſon why men are ſuch ſtrangers to themſelves, and dare not not enter into any diſcourſe upon this ſubject with their own hearts, becauſe they know they ſhould ſoon make an uproar in their Conſciences, that would not be ſtilled in haſte; they cocker their falſe hearts as much as *David* did his *Adonijah*, who in all his life never diſpleaſed him ſo much as to aſke him *Why dveſt thou ſo?* Nor they their ſoules to the day of their death by asking them, Soul, why hopeſt thou ſo? Or if they have, it hath beene as *Pilate* who asked *Chriſt what was Truth. John* 18. but had no minde to ſtay for an anſwer. May be thou art an ignorant ſoule who knoweſt neither who Chriſt is, nor what in Chriſt hope is to faſten its hold upon; but only with a blind ſurmiſe thou hopeſt, God will be better to thee then to damme thee at laſt; but why thou thus hopeſt, thou canſt give no reaſon, nor I neither. If he will ſave thee as now thou art, he muſt make a new Goſpel for thy ſake; for in this Bible it damnes thee without hope or helpe; *The Goſpel is hid to them that periſh.* 2 *Cor.*4. But if knowledge will do it, thou haply canſt ſhew good ſtore of that; this is the breaſt-work under which thou lyeſt, and keepeſt off thoſe ſhot which are made at thee from the word, for thoſe luſts thou liveſt and lyeſt in as a beaſt in his dung, defiling thy ſelfe with them dayly. And is this all thou haſt to prove thy hopes for ſalvation true and ſolid? indeed many make no better uſe of their knowledge of the Scripture, than theives do of the knowledge they have of the Law of the Land, who ſtudy it not that they mean to keep it, but to make them more cunning to evade the charge of it, when called in queſtion by it: So many acquaint themſelves with the Word, eſpecially thoſe paſſages in it that diſplay the mercy of God to ſinners at the greateſt breadth, that with theſe, they may ſtuff a pillow to lay their wretched heads on, when the cry of their abominations, in which they live, begins to break their reſt. God deliver you (my dear friends) from ſuch a hope as this. Surely you mean to provide a better Anſwer to give unto Chriſt at the great day than this, why ye hope to be ſaved by him; do you not? Will thy knowledge, thinkeſt thou, be as ſtrong a plea for Salvation, as thy ſins which thou walloweſt in againſt that knowledge, will be for thy damnation? If there be hope for ſuch as thee, then come *Judas* and *Jezabel*, yea *Devils*, and all ye infernal ſpirits, and ſtrike in with this good company for a part with them,

them, for some of you can plead more of this than any of them all.

But may be thou hast more yet to say for thy self than this comes to. Thou art not only a knowing person, but a reformed also; the pollutions in which once thou layest, now thou hast escaped, yea thy reformation is embellisht and set forth with a very gaudy profession of Religion, both which have gained thee a very high opinion in the thoughts of all thy Neighbours, so that if Heaven might be carried by hands, thou couldst haply have a Testimonial for thy unblameable and Saint-like behaviour among them; yet let me tell thee, if thou meanest to be faithful to thy own soul, thou must not rest in their charitable opinion of thee, nor judge of thy hopes for Heaven, by what comes under their cognizance, to wit, the behaviour of thy outward man (for further their eye and observation reacheth not) but art to look inward into thy own bosome, and enquire, what spring thou canst find there to have been the cause of this change and new motion that hath appeared in thy external conversation: This and this alone must decide the controversie, and bring thy thoughts to an issue, what to judge of thy hope, whether spurious or legitimate. It is not a new face that colours our outward behaviour, but a new principle that changeth the frame of the heart within, will evince thy hope to be good and genuine; 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope.* The new birth entitles to the new hope; if the soul be dead, the hope cannot be alive. And the soul may be dead, and yet put into a very handsome dress of external reformation and profession, as well as a dead body may be clad with rich cloaths. A beggars son got into the cloaths of a rich mans child, may as well hope to be Heir to the rich mans land, as thou, by an external reformation and profession, to be Gods Heir in glory. The childs hopes are from his own father, not from a stranger; now while thou art in a natural estate (though never so finified) Old *Adam* is thy father and what canst thou hope from him, who proved worse than nought, and left his poor posterity nothing, except we should put a crazy mortal body, a sinful nature, and a fearful expectation of death temporal and eternal from the wrathful hand of a provoked God (which indeed he left all his children) into his

his inventory! O Sirs, how can you give way that any ſleep ſhould fall upon your eyes, till you get into this relation to God! *Hannah* was a woman of a bitter ſpirit, till ſhe got a childe from God; and haſt not thou more reaſon to be ſo, till thou canſt get to be a child of God? Better a thouſand times over that thou ſhouldſt die childleſs, than Fatherleſs; my meaning is, that thou ſhouldſt leave no child to inherit thy eſtate on earth, than to have no Father to give thee an inheritance in Heaven when thou art taken hence.

CHAP. IX.

Two duties preſst upon thoſe who upon tryal find this grace of Hope *in them.*

FOR Exhortation; and this either reſpects believers who are furniſht with this Helmet; or unbelievers who yet are without hope.

Firſt, for you (believers) who, upon trial, are found to have this Helmet of Hope, Several duties are to be preſſed upon you as ſuch.

SECT. I.

1. Firſt. BE thankful for this unſpeakable gift. I will not believe thou haſt it, if thy heart be not abundantly let out in thankfulneſs for it. Bleſſed *Paul* cannot ſpeak of this, but in a Doxology, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. *Bleſſed be God, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* The uſual Proem to his *Epiſtles*, is of this ſtrain, *Col.* 1. 5. *Epheſ.* 1. 3. Haſt thou heaven in hope? 'Tis more than if thou hadſt the whole World in hand.

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The greateſt Monarch the earth hath, will be glad, in a dying houre, to change his Crown for thy Helmet; his Crown will not procure him this Helmet, but thy Helmet will bring thee to a Crown, when he ſhall have none to wear; a Crown, not of gold, but of glory, which once on, ſhall never be taken off, as his is ſure to be. O remember, Chriſtian, what but a while ſince thou wert; ſo far from having any hope of Heaven, that thou were under a fearful expectation of Hell and Damnation; And are thoſe Chains of guilt, with which thy trembling conſcience was weighed down unto deſpair, taken off, and thy head lift up to look for ſuch high preferment in the celeſtial Court of that God, whoſe wrath thou hadſt, by thy horrid treaſons, moſt juſtly incenſed againſt thee? Certainly, of all the men in the world, thou art deepeſt in debt to the mercy of God: If he will be thanked for a Cruſt; he looks, ſure, thou ſhouldſt give him more for a Crown. If food and rayment, though courſe and mean, (ſuppoſe but rotsand rags) be gratefully to be acknowledg'd; O with what raviſhment of love and thankfulneſs, are you to think and ſpeak of thoſe rarities and Robes with which you hope to be fed and clad in his heavenly Kingdom! eſpecially if you caſt your eye aſide, and behold thoſe that were once your fellow-priſoners, in what a ſad and diſmal condition they continue in, while all this happineſs is befaln you! It could not ſure but affect his heart into admiration of his Princes mercy, and undeſerved favour to him, who is ſaved from the Gibbet only by his gracious pardon; if as he is riding in a Coach towards his Princes Court (there to live in Wealth and Honour) he ſhould meet ſome of his fellow Traitours on Sleds, as they are dragging full of ſhame and horror to execution, for the ſame Treaſon in which he had as deep a hand as any of them all. And doſt not thou ſee (Chriſtian) many of thy poor Neighbors, with whom haply thou haſt had a partnerſhip in ſin, pinion'd with impenitency and unbelief, driving apace to Hell and deſtruction, while thou, by the free diſtinguiſhing mercy of God, art on thy way for Heaven and Glory! O down on thy knees, and cry out, *Lord, Why wilt thou ſhew thy ſelf to me, and not to theſe*! How eaſie had it been, and righteous for God, to have directed the pardon to them, and the warrant for Damnation unto thee! When thou haſt ſpent thy own breath and ſpirits in praiſing God, thou hadſt need beg a collecti-

on of praises of all thy Friends, that have a heart to contribute to such a charitable work, that they would help thee in paying this debt; and get all this, with what in Heaven thou shalt disburse thy self to all eternity, in better coyne than can be expected from thee here (where thy soul is embased with sinful mixtures) it must be accounted rather an acknowledgement of what thou owest to thy God, than any payment of the least part of the debt.

Sect. II.

2 *Secondly.* LIve up to thy hopes Christian; Let there be a *decorum* kept between thy principles and thy practises; thy hope of heaven, and walk on earth. The eye should direct the foot. Thou lookest for Salvation; walk the same way thy eye looks. This is so often prest in the word, as shews both its necessity and difficulty. Sometimes we are stird up to act *as becometh Saints*, *Rom.* 16.2. *Eph.*5.3. Sometimes, *as becometh the Gospel of Christ*, Phil. 1.27. Sometimes, *as becometh those who profess godliness*, 1 Tim.2.10. There is a τὸ πρέπον, a *decorum*, and comely behaviour, which if a Christian doth not observe in his walking, he betrays his high Calling and hopes, unto scorn and contempt. To look high, and to live low, O how ridiculous appears it to all men! When a man is drest on purpose to be laught at and made a jeering-stock, they put on him something of the King, and something of the Beggar, that by this patchery of mock-majesty, with sordid baseness together, he may appear the greater fool to all the company. And certainly, if the Devil might have the dressing of a man, so as to cast the greatest shame and ignominy upon him, yea upon Christ and the profession of his Gospel, he could not think of a readier way than to perswade a wretch to pretend to high and glorious hopes of Heaven, and then to have nothing suitable to the high-flown hopes in his conversation, but all base and unworthy of such royal claims. If ye should see one going into the field with a Helmet of Brass on his Head, but a wooden sword in one hand, and a paper-shield on the other, and the rest of his Armour like to these, you would ex-

expect he was not likely to hurt his enemies, except they should break their sides with laughing at him. Such a goodly spectacle is the brag Professour who lifts up his head on high with a bold expectation of Salvation, but can shew never a grace beside, to suit with the great hope he hath taken up; he may make the Devil sport, but never do him any great hurt, or himself good.

Quest. *But, may be you will aske, how is the Christian to live up to his hopes.*

Answ. I answer, First in general, he is to be careful to do nothing in which he may not freely act his hope, and from the promise expect that God will for Christs sake, both approve the action, and reward his person for it. Ask thy soul this question seriously, before thou engagest in any work; May, I hope, that God will bid me good speed? Can I look for his countenance in it, and his blessing on it? It is very unworthy of a Christian to do any thing sneakingly, as if he were afraid God or his conscience should be privy to his work; *Whatsoever is not of hope, is sin, because it cannot be of faith,* O how would this hedge in the Christians heart from all by-paths! possibly thou hast a grudge against thy neighbour; the fire is kindled in thy heart, though it flames not presently out into bitter words, and angry behaviour, and thou art going to pray; ask now thy soul, whether God will accept that sacrifice which is kindled with such strange fire? fire? yea, bid thy soul bethink her self how thy hopes of pardoning and saving mercy from God can agree with thy wrathful unforgiving spirit towards thy brother? certainly as the Sun cannot well be seen through a disturb'd aire, so neither can the eye of hope well see her object (heavens salvation) when the soul is tumultuous and royled with anger and unchristian passion.

But Secondly to instance in some particulars, wherein you must comport with your hopes of Salvation. 2

CHAP. X.

Several instances wherein the Christian should Comport with, and live up to his hopes.

SECT. I.

1. IN your Company. Man is a sociable creature, made for fellowship. And what company is fit for thee to consort with, but those of the same breeding and hopes with thy self? The Saints are a distinct society from the world. *Let ours learn to maintaine good works. Titus* 3. 14. Ours, *i. e.* of our fellowship. And it becomes them to seek their company among themselves. That of *Peter* and *John* is observable, *Acts* 4. 23. *Being let go, they went to their own company.* When among the ungodly world, they made account they were not in their own company, and therefore stay'd no longer than needs must among them. There were enough surely in the Land of *Canaan* with whom *Abraham* might have associated; but he knew they were not company for him to be linked to in any intimacy of acquaintance; and therefore it is said of him, *Heb.* 11. 9. *that he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange Country, dwelling in Tabernacles with* Isaac *and* Jacob *the heirs with him of the same promise.* We find him indeed confederate with *Mamre* the *Amorite*, and *Eschol*, and *Aner*, his brethren, *Gen.* 14. 13. which presupposeth more than ordinary acquaintance. But these in all probability, were Proselytes, and had, by *Abrahams* godly perswasions, renounced their Idolatry, to worship, with him, the true God: and we may the rather be induced to think so, because we find them so deeply engaged with *Abraham* in battel against

g inſt thoſe Idolatrous Neighbour Princes, which (had they themſelves been Idolaters) 'tis like they would not have done for a ſtranger, and him of a ſtrange Religion alſo. We find how dearly ſome of the Saints have paid for their acquaintance with the wicked, as *Jehoſophat* for his intimacy with *Ahab*, and many others; and if knowing this, we ſhall yet aſſociate our ſelves with ſuch, we cannot in reaſon look to pay leſs than they have done; yea well if we come off ſo cheap, becauſe we have their follies recorded to make us wiſer. O conſider, Chriſtian, whether thou art going in thy hopes; is it not to Heaven? and do not men ſeek for ſuch company as go their way? And are the wicked of thy way! When Heavens way and Hells meet in one road, then, and not till then, can that be. And if thy companion will not walk in Heaven-way, what wilt thou do that walkeſt with him! It is to be feared, thou muſt comply too much with him in his way. In a word, Chriſtian, Thy hope points to Heaven, and is it not one thing thou hopeſt for, when thou comeſt there, to be delivered from all company with the wicked? and what thou then hopeſt for, doſt thou not now pray for? ſure enough thou doſt, if a true Saint. Whatever is the object of a Saints hope, is the ſubject of his prayer. As oft as thou ſayeſt, *Thy Kingdom come*, thou prayeſt thus much: And will hoping and praying to be delivered from them, ſtand with throwing thy ſelf upon them, and intimate familiarity with them?

SECT. II.

Secondly. THen thou comporteſt with thy hopes of Salvation, when thou laboureſt to be as holy in thy converſation, as thou art high in thy expectation. This the *Apoſtle* urgeth from the condecency of the thing, 2 *Pet.* 3. 11. *What manner of perſons ought ye to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs, looking for, and haſtening unto the coming of the day of God?* Certainly, it becomes ſuch to be holy even to admiration, who look for ſuch a bleſſed day! We hope then to be like the Angels in glory, and therefore ſhould, if poſſible, live now like Angels in holineſs. Every believing ſoul is Chriſts Spouſe. The day of con- 2.

converſion, is the day of eſpouſals, wherein ſhe is contracted and betrothed by faith to Chriſt; And as ſuch, lives in hope for the Marriage day, when he ſhall come and fetch her home unto his fathers houſe (as *Iſaac* did *Rebecca* into his Mothers Tent) there to cohabite with him, and live in his ſweet embraces of love, world without end. Now, would the Bride have her Bridegroom find her (when he comes) in her ſluttery and vile raiment? No ſure; *Can a Bride forget her attire?* Jer.2.32. Was it ever known, that a Bride forgat to have her Wedding-cloaths made againſt the Marriage day? or to put them on, when ſhe looks for her Bridegrooms coming? Holyneſs is the *raiment of needle-work*, in which (Chriſtian) thou art *to be brought unto thy King and Husband*, Pſal.45.14. Wherefore is the Wedding day put off ſo long, but becauſe this garment is ſo long a making? When this is once wrought, and thou ready dreſs'd, then that joyful day comes; *The Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made her ſelf ready*, Rev. 19.8. Thou haſt not, Chriſtian, a weightier Argument to knock down all temptations to ſin, nor a more honourable way to get the victory of them, than by ſetting thy hope to grapple with them. I confeſs 'tis well when this Enemy is worſted, what hand ſoever he falls by; though it be the fear of Hell that clubs it down in the lives of men, it is better than not at all; yet I muſt tell you, that as the *Iſraelites* ſtate was poor and ſervile, when they were fain to borrow the *Philiſtims grind-ſtone to ſharpen every man his Axe and Mattock*, 1 Sam. 13.22. ſo it ſpeaks the Chriſtian to be in no very good ſtate as to his ſpiritual affairs, when he is fain to uſe the wicked mans Argument to keep him from ſinning, and nothing will ſet an edge upon his ſpirit to cut through temptation, but what the uncircumciſed World themſelves uſe. Thou, Chriſtian, art of a nobler ſpirit, and more refined temper than theſe, I trow. And as we have a finer ſtone to ſharpen a Raſour with, than we uſe for a Butchers Knife; ſo certainly, a more ſpiritual and ingenuous Argument would become thee better to make thee keen and ſharp againſt ſin, than what prevails with the worſt of men ſometimes to forbear at leaſt acting their wickedneſs. Go thou Chriſtian to thy Hope, and while the ſlaviſh ſinner ſcares and terrifies himſelf from his luſt with fire and brimſtone, do thou ſhame thy ſelf out of all acquaintance with it from the great and glori-

glorious things thou lookeſt for in Heaven. Is it a ſin of ſenſual pleaſure that aſſaults thy Caſtle ? Say then to thy ſoul, Shall I play the beaſt on earth, that hope to be ſuch a glorious creature in Heaven! Shall that head be found now in a *Dalilahs* lap, that ere long I hope will be laid in *Abraham's* boſome! Can I now yield to defile that body with luſt and vomit, which is the garment my ſoul hopes to wear in Heaven! O no! avant Satan, I'le have nothing to do with thee, or any thing that will make me unmeet for that Bleſſed place and Holy ſtate I wait for.

SECT. III.

Thirdly. LEt thy hope of Heaven moderate thy affections to earth. *Be ſober, and hope*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 13. You that look for ſo much in another world, may very well be content with a little in this. Nothing more unbecomes a Heavenly hope, than an earthly heart. You would think it an unſeemly thing, to ſee ſome rich man, that hath a vaſte eſtate, among the poor Gleaners in Harveſt time, as buſie to pick up the ears of Corn that are left in the field, as the moſt miſerable beggar in the company. O how all the world would cry ſhame of ſuch a ſordid-ſpirited man! Well Chriſtian, be not angry, if I tell thee that thou doſt a more ſhameful thing thy ſelf by far, if thou that pretendeſt to hope for Heaven, beeſt as eager in the purſuit of this worlds traſh, as the poor carnal wretch is who expects no portion, but what God hath left him to pick up in the field of this World. Certainly, thy hope is either falſe, or at beſt very little. The higher that the Summer Sun mounts above the horizon, the more force it bears both to clear and alſo heat the air with his beams: and if thy hope of ſalvation were advanced to any ordinary pitch and heighth in thy ſoul, it would ſcatter theſe inordinate deſires after this World with which now thou art choaked up, and put thee into a greater heat of affection after Heaven, than now thou feeleſt to things below. I remember, *Auguſtine* relating what ſweet diſcourſe paſſed once between his Mother and himſelf concerning the joys of Heaven, breaks forth into this A-

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postrophe, *Lord, thou knoweſt, Quàm vilùit nobis in illo die hic mundus, how vile and contemptible this ſorry World was in our eye in that day, when our hearts were warmed with ſome ſweet diſcourſe of that bleſſed place.* And I doubt not but every gracious perſon finds the ſame by himſelf; the nearer to heaven he gets in his hopes, the further he goes from earth in his deſires: When he ſtands upon theſe batlements of Heaven, he can look down upon this Dunghill World as a *Nigrum nihil*, a little duſt-heap, next to nothing. It is *Sculletus* his obſervation, that though there are many blemiſhes by which the eminent Saints and Servants of God, recorded in Scripture, are ſet forth as inſtances of Humane frailty; yet not one godly man in all the Scripture is to be found, whoſe ſtory is blotted with the charge of Covetouſneſs. If that hold true, which as yet I am not able to diſprove, we may wonder how it comes about, that it ſhould, now a dayes, be called the *Profeſſours ſin*, and become a common charge laid by the prophane upon thoſe that pretend to Heaven more than themſelves. O wo to thoſe wretched men, who, by their ſcandalous practiſes in this kind, put the Coal into wicked mens hands, with which they now black the names of all the godly, as if to be covetous, were a neceſſary conſequent of Profeſſion.

SECT. IV.

4. LEt thy hope of Heaven maſter thy fear of Death. Why ſhouldſt thou be afraid to die, who hopeſt to live by dying! Is the Apprentice afraid of the Day when his Time comes out? He that runs a race, of coming too ſoon to his goale? The Pilot troubled when he ſees his harbour? Or the betrothed Virgin grieved when the Wedding day approacheth? Death is all this to thee; when that comes, thy Indenture expires, and thy *Jubilee* is come. Thy race is run, and the Crown wun, ſure to drop on thy head when thy ſoul goes out of thy body. Thy voyage, how troubleſome ſoever it was in the Sailing, is now happily finiſht, and Death doth but this Friendly Office for thee, to uncover and open the *Ark* of thy body, that it may ſafely land thy ſoul on the

the ſhore of eternity at thy heavenly Fathers door, yea in his ſweet embraces, never to be put to ſea more. In a word, Thy Husband is come for thee, and knocks with Deaths hand at thy Door, to come forth unto him, that he may perform his promiſe which in the day of thy betrothing he made to thee; and thou loveſt him but little, if thou beeſt not willing to be at the trouble of a remove hence, for to enjoy his bliſsful preſence, in his Fathers Royal Palace of Heaven, where ſuch preparation is made for thy entertainment, that thou canſt not know here, though an Angel were ſent on purpoſe to inform thee. O what tongue can expreſs that felicity, which infinite mercy beſpeaks, infinite wiſdome deviſeth, infinite merit purchaſeth, and infinite power makes ready. I have read that the *Turks* ſay, *They do not think we Chriſtians believe Heaven to be ſuch a glorious place as we profeſs and talk of; for if we did, we would not be ſo afraid to go thither, as they ſee many that profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, to be.* It cannot be denied, but all inordinate fears of death, betray great unbelief, and little hope. We do not look upon death under a right notion, and ſo we ſtart at it, which were we by faith but able to ſee through, and aſſure our ſelves it comes to do us a good turn; we ſhould feed as comfortably on the thoughts of it, as now we are ſcared at the apparition of it. The Horſe eats that Hay in the Rack, which he is afraid of when a little lies at a diſtance on the Road; becauſe there he knows it, but on the way he doth not. Chriſtian, underſtand aright what meſſage Death brings to thee, and the fear of it will be over; it ſnatcheth thee indeed from this Worlds enjoyments, but it leads thee to the felicities of another incomparably better. And who, at a Feaſt, will chide the Servant that takes away the firſt courſe, of which enough is eaten, to make room for the ſecond to be ſet on, that conſiſts of far greater delicacies?

SECT. V.

Fifthly. THen thou comporteſt with thy hope, when thou liveſt in the joy of thy hope. A ſad uncheerful heart does not become a lively hope. Let him follow his Maſter with a 5

heavy countenance, that looks to get nothing by his service; thou art out of this fear, and therefore wrongeſt both thy ſelf and thy God too by thy diſconſolate ſpirit, *Heb.* 3 6. *Whoſe houſe are we, if we hold faſt the confidence, and the rejoycing of the hope, firm unto the end.* Chriſt takes no more delight to dwell in a ſad uncheerful heart, than we in a dark melancholy houſe. Open thy ſhuts therefore, and let in the light which ſheds its beams upon thee from the Promiſe, or elſe thy ſweet Saviour will be gone. We do not uſe to entertain our Friends in a dark room, or ſit by thoſe that viſit us Mopiſh and Melancholick, leſt they ſhould think we are weary of their company. Chriſt brings ſuch good news with him, as may beſpeak better welcome with thee than a dejected countenance, and a diſconſolate ſpirit. I tell thee, Chriſtian, could ſuch a meſſage be carried to the damned, as might give them any hope (though never ſo little) of Salvation, it would make Hell it ſelf a lightſome place, and tune thoſe miſerable ſouls into a rejoycing temper in the midſt of their preſent torments. Bluſh then, and be aſhamed, O ye drooping Saints, that a few thin clouds of ſome ſhort afflictions, coming over your heads, ſhould ſo wrap you up in the darkneſs of your ſpirits, as that the hope of Heaven; whither you look at laſt to come, ſhould not be able in a moment, to diſpel and turn your ſorrow into a raviſhment of joy and comfort.

SECT. VI.

6 Sixthly. WHen with thy rejoycing of hope thou preſerveſt an awful fear of God; *The Lord taketh pleaſure in them that fear him, in thoſe that hope in his mercy*, Pſal. 147. 11. We too often ſee, that children forget to pay that reſpect and reverence which is due to their Parents, when once the eſtate is made ſure unto them. And truly, though the Doctrine of Aſſurance cannot be charged with any ſuch bitter fruit to grow naturally from it, as the *Remonſtrants* and *Papiſts* would make us believe; yet we are too prone to abuſe it; yea, the beſt of Saints may, after they have the love of God, with eternal life, paſſed over to them under the privy ſeal of

of Hopes assurance, be led so far into temptation, as to fall foully, and carry themselves very undutifully. Witness *David* and *Solomon*, whose saddest miscarriages were after God had obliged them by opening his very heart to them in such manifestations of his love to them, as few are to be found that had the like; both father and son are checkt by God for this, and a blot left upon their History, on purpose to shew what a sad accent this gave to their sin, that they fell after such discoveries of divine love made to them, and also to leave us instances not barely of humane frailty, but of graces frailty in this life, and that in the most eminent Saints, such as were Pen-men of Holy Writ, That when our hope growsinto greatest assurance, and this assurance spreads it self into highest rejoycing from the certainty of our expected glory, we should yet nourish a holy fear of God in our hearts, lest we grow crank, and forget God in the abundance of our peace. This holy fear will be to our joy, as the continual dropping of water on the Iron-work in the Fullers wheele, which keeps it from firing, or as the *pericardium* with which the God of Nature hath moated about the heart in our bodies, that by the water in it, the heart which is perpetually in motion, might be kept from being inflamed into a distemper'd heat. The Devil is pleased if he can at any time get a Saint to sin, but he glorieth most, when he can lay them in the dirt, in their Holy-day cloaths, as I may so say, and make them defile themselves when they have their garments of Salvation on, I mean those which God hath in some more than ordinary discovery of himself, cloathed them withal; if at such a time he can be too hard for them, then he hath, he thinks, a fair occasion given him to go, and insultingly shew God what pickle his child is in, and hold up the Christians assurance and comfort mockingly (as they their brothers coat to their father) besmeared with the blood and filth of some beastly sin he hath thrown him into, and ask God, Is this the assurance thou hast given him of Heaven? and this the garment of Salvation which thou didst put on him? see where he hath laid it, and what a case he hath made it in: O what gracious soul trembles not at the thought of putting such blasphemy into the mouth of the Devil to reproach the living God by! That Christian is the beloved Child, and shall be most made of by his Heavenly Father, who sits not down to loyter in the Sun-shine of divine

love, but gathers up his feet the nimbler in the way of duty, becauſe his God is ſo kind to make his walk more cheerful and comfortable than others find it, and who looſeth not his reverential fear of God, in Gods familiarity with him. *Moſes* is a rare inſtance for this: Did ever the great God treat a mortal man, a Saint in fleſh, with the like familiarity and condeſcention, as he did that holy man, with whom *he ſpake mouth to mouth, and before whom he cauſed all his goodneſs to paſe?* Exod. 34. 6. And how bears he this tranſcending act of grace? Doth he grow bold, and forget his diſtance between God and him by this low ſtoop of the Divine Majeſty to converſe with him in ſuch a humble manner, if I may ſo ſay? No, his heart was never in all his life more filled with the reverence of God than now: He trembled indeed, and quaked more ('tis very likely) on Mount *Sinai*, but his filial fear was as conſpicuous now as then. It is true, this extraordinary manifeſtation of thoſe ſoul-raviſhing attributes of Gods love and goodneſs, eſpecially his pardoning mercy to him that knew himſelf a ſinner, and at that time made much more ſenſible thereof by the terrour which the dreadful promulgation of the Law had left on his ſpirit, could not but exceedingly heighten his joy, and over-run his ſoul with a ſweet love to ſo gracious a God: yet was not *Moſes* his aweful fear of God, drowned or loſt in the high tide of theſe ſweeter affections; for it follows, Ver. 8. *And* Moſes *made haſte and bowed his head toward the earth, and worſhiped.* This favorite of Heaven, mark how he ſhews his fear of God moſt, when God expreſſeth his love to him moſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

An exhortation to Strengthen Hope. Preſs'd from three Arguments.

Thirdly. LAbour, O ye Saints, to ſtrengthen your Hope. There is as a weak faith, ſo a wavering, unſtedfaſt hope; this you are by the diligent uſe of all means to eſtabliſh and conſolidate. Now then Hope is firm and ſolid, when the Chriſtian doth not fluctuate *formidine oppoſiti*, but by this Anchor hold that hope hath on the promiſe, is kept from thoſe dejections and tumultuous fears with which they that have no hope are ſwallowed up, and they whoſe hope is but weak, are ſadly diſcompoſed and ſhaken. *Solidum eſt quod ſui ſolius eſt plenum*, that is a ſolid body which is compact, and free from Hetrogenial mixtures. The more pure gold is from droſs, and whatever is of a different nature to its ſelf, the more ſolid it is: So hope, the more it is refined from groundleſs preſumption on the one hand, or ſlaviſh fear and diſtruſt on the other, the more ſolid and ſtrong it is. This in Scripture is called the *aſſurance of hope*. Now to provoke you to a holy zeal in your endeavor after this. *Uſe 3.*

SECT. I.

First. COnſider, It is thy duty ſo to do; indeed by the *Papiſts* Doctrine, no man is bound to labour for ſuch an aſſurance. But whether we ſhould believe God or them, judge ye. What ſaith the Spirit of God, *Heb.* 6. 11. *We deſire that every one of you; do ſhew the ſame diligence to the full aſſurance of* 1

hope

hope unto the end; that you be not ſlothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promiſe. Obſerve

Firſt, The thing he exhorts to endeavor for, πρὸς τὴν πληροφορίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος, *to the full aſſurance of hope.* They whoſe hope is weak, ſayle but with a ſcant ſide-wind; The Apoſtle would have them go afore the wind, and be carried with a full gale to Heaven, which then is done, when the ſoul, like a ſayle ſpread to the wind, is ſo filled with the truth and goodneſs of the promiſe, that it ſwells into an aſſured hope of what is promiſed, and rejoyceth in a certain expectation of what it ſhall have when it comes to the ſhore of eternity, though it be now toſſed and weather-beaten with a thouſand temptations, and trials in its paſſage thither.

Secondly, Obſerve whom he preſſeth this duty upon, not ſome few choiſe Chriſtians, as an enterprize laid out for them above the reſt of their fellow-ſouldiers; but he layes it on every perſon that will prove himſelf a Chriſtian, *We deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, &c.* In our civil Trade, and particular Worldly Calling, it were ſinful for every poor man to propound ſuch a vaſt eſtate to himſelf in his own deſires as he ſees ſome few, the wealthieſt Merchants in a City, have got by their Trade, ſo as no leſs ſhall content him. But in the ſpiritual Trade of a Chriſtian, it is very warrantable, for every Chriſtian to covet to be as rich in grace as the beſt: *Paul* himſelf will not think himſelf wrong'd, if thou deſireſt to be as holy a man as himſelf was, and laboureſt after as ſtrong a faith and ſtedfaſt a hope as he had; yea, thou ought'ſt not to content thy ſelf with what thou haſt, if there were but one degree of grace more to be had, than what at preſent thou haſt obtain'd. And

Thirdly, Obſerve what he imputes the weakneſs of the Saints grace to; not an impoſſibility of attaining to more, but their ſloth and lazineſs; and therefore he oppoſeth this to that bleſſed frame of heart he ſo much wiſheth them, Ver. 12. *That ye be not ſlothful*: Indeed 'tis the diligent hand makes rich, as in this worlds goods, ſo in this heavenly treaſure alſo.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Secondly, LAbour to ſtrengthen thy hope of ſalvation, or thou wilt ſhew that thou little eſteemeſt Chriſt and his ſalvation; as we prize any good, ſo we labour more or leſſe to aſſure our ſelves of it. If a Prince ſhould loſe a pin from his ſleeve, or a penny out of his purſe, and one ſhould bring him news they are found; the things are ſo inconſiderable, that he would not care whether it were true or not; but if his Kingdom lay at ſtake in the field, and intelligence comes, that his Army hath got the day, and beat the enemy, O how he would long to have his hope that is now raiſed a little, confirmed more ſtrongly by another Poſt! Is heaven worth ſo little, that you can be ſatisfied with a few probabilities, and uncertain May-bees you ſhall come thither? Thou baſely deſpiſeſt that bleſſed place, if thou beeſt no more ſolicitous to know the truth of thy title to it. When *Micaiah* ſeem'd to give *Ahab* (now advancing his Army againſt *Ramoth Gilead*) ſome hope of a victory, by bidding him go up and proſper; The thing being paſſionately deſired by the King, he fears the worſt (as indeed he had reaſon, for the *Prophets* ſpeech was Ironical) and therefore cannot reſt till he know more of this matter. *And the King ſaid unto him, how oft ſhall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord*, 1 Kings 22. 16. May be thou haſt ſome looſe wavering hopes of heaven, floating in thy ſoul, if now thou didſt think thy eternal woe or weale lay in the truth or falſhood of that hope, certainly thou wouldeſt ſearch thy heart by the Word, and adjure thy conſcience after an impartial review, to tell thee the naked truth, what thy ſtate is, and whether thou mayeſt in Gods name, and with the leave of his Word hope it ſhall be thy portion or not; and this thou would'ſt do, not hypocritically as that wretched King did (who adjured *Micaiah* to tell him the truth, and then would not believe him, though he did it faithfully) but with great plainneſſe of heart, it being about a buſineſſe of no leſſe importance than what ſhall become of thee to eternity. *Peter* when ſurprized with the tydings of Chriſts reſurrection, though the report did not finde ſuch credit with him as it might; yet by his ſpeedy running to, and looking into the Sepulchre, 2.

pulchre, he ſhew'd both how dearly he loved his Lord, as alſo how joyful a man he ſhould be if the news held true, that he was alive. Thus Chriſtian, though the promiſe of eternal life, hath not hitherto produced ſuch an aſſurance of hope, that thou art the perſon that ſhalt undoubtedly enjoy it, yet ſhew what appreciating thoughts thou haſt of that bliſsful ſtate, by endeavouring to ſtrengthen thy hope, and put thee out of doubt thereof.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Conſider this alſo, in the laſt place, That thou knoweſt not, what ſtreſſe thy Hope may be put to before thou dieſt. The wiſe Mariner doth victual his ſhip for the longeſt day; he reckons on foul weather and croſſe winds which may retard his voyage, and make it more troubleſome, though ſome finde it a ſhorter cutt, and fairer paſſage, and therefore he ſtores himſelf accordingly, knowing well, it is eaſier carrying proviſion to ſea, than getting it there. *Non facilè inveniuntur in adverſitate præſidia, quæ non fuerint in pace quæſita*, a good ſpeech of *Auſtin*. God himſelf tells us, *we have need of patience*, he means great ſtore of patience, *that after We have done the will of God, we may receive the promiſe*, Heb. 10. 36. And if of patience, then of hope; becauſe patience bears all on hopes back. Now becauſe we know not the certain degree of Hope that will ſerve our turn (God having purpoſely concealed the weight of affliction and temptation he intends to lay on us) therefore we ſhould never ceaſe our endeavour to ſtrengthen it. There are hard duties to be performed, and ſtrong trials to be endured, and theſe require a hope proportionable. We are *to hold faſt the rejoycing of our hope unto the end*, Hebr. 3. 6. Now will the Chriſtian of weak hope do this? he alas is like a leaky ſhip with a rich lading, the fear of ſinking before ſhe gets the Port, takes away the owners joy of the treaſure ſhe carries. Bid ſuch a one rejoyce in his inheritance that is laid up in heaven for him, and he will tell you, he queſtions whether ever he ſhall come there. Patient waiting for mercy prorogued and deferred, is another hard duty, *It is good that a man ſhould both hope, and quietly wait for*

for the salvation of the Lord. Now weak hope is short-breathed, and cannot stay long with any quietness. *Omne invalidum est querulum*; weak persons are commonly hardest to please; soon peevish and froward, if they have not what they would, and that when they desire it also. When *Davids* faith and hope were under a distemper, then he falls out with all: The *Prophet* himself that brought him the news of a Kingdom, cannot escape his censure, and all because the promise staid longer before it was delivered than he expected; *I said in my haste, All men are lyars*, Psa. 116. whereas the promise went not a day beyond its due time, but he missed of its true reckoning through his inordinate desire; but take him in his healthful temper, when his faith and hope are strong, and he is not so hasty then to call for a mercy out of Gods hands, but thinks his estate in Gods hands as safe as if it were paid into his own, *Psal.* 65. 1. *Praise waiteth for thee, O Lord:* Or, Praise is silent for thee, *so the Hebr.* דמיה תהלה will bear it. As if the holy man had said, Lord, I do quietly wait for a time to praise thee; my soul is not in an up-roare because thou stayest, I am not murmuring, but rather stringing my Harp, and tuning my Instrument with much patience and confidence, that I may be ready to strike up when the joyful news of my deliverance first comes. You have much ado to make the child quiet till Dinner, though he sees preparations for a great Feast; but one that is grown up will be soon pacified when he is kept a little longer than ordinary from his meale upon such an occasion. O Christian, 'tis our childishness and weakness of grace, (especially of our hope) that makes us so soon out of patience to wait Gods leasure; strengthen hope, and patience will grow with it. In a word, Christian, thou hast great trials and strong temptations to conquer, before you enter Heaven-Gates, and be cloathed with your Garments of Salvation there. Now defend thy hope, and that will defend thee in these; strengthen that, and that will carry thee through them. The head, every member is officious to preserve it; The hands are lift up to keep off the blow, the feet run to carry the head from danger, the mouth will receive any unsavory Pill to draw fumes and humours from the head. Salvation is to the soul, what the head is to the body, the principal thing it should labour to secure; and hope is to our Salvation, what the Helmet is to the Head. Now, if he be unwise

that ventures his head under a weak Helmet in the midst of Bullets at the time of battel; then much more unwise he that hazards his Salvation with a weak Hope. Know, O Christian, the issue of the battel with thy enemy depends on thy hope, if that fail, all is lost. Thy hope is in conflicts with temptations and sufferings, as a Prince is amidst his Army, who puts life into them all, while he looks on and encourageth them to the battel, but if a report of the Kings being slain comes to their ears, their courage fails, and hearts faint; therefore *Ahab* would be held up in his Chariot to conceal his danger from his people, the knowledge of which would have cast a damp on their courage. Thy hope is the mark Satans Arrows are level'd at; if possible, keep that from wounding; or if at any time his Dart reacheth it, and thy spirit begins to bleed of the wound which he hath given thee, by questioning, Whether such great sins can be pardoned as thou hast committed, such old festred sores, as thy lusts have been, can be ever cured, or afflictions that are so heavy, and have continued so long, can possibly be either endured, or removed. Now labour, as for thy life, to hold up thy hope though wounded in the Chariot of the promise, and bow not by despairing, to let the Devil trample on thy soul: So soon as thy hope gives up the ghost, will this cursed Fiend stamp thee under his foul feet, and take his full revenge of thee, and that without any power of thy soul to strike a stroke for thy defence: This will so dispirit thee, that thou wilt be ready to throw up all endeavor and attendance on the means of Salvation; yea, desperately say, To what purpose is it to think of praying, hearing, and meditating, when there is no hope? What, should we send for the Physician when our friend is dead? What good will the chafing and rubbing the body do, when the head is severed from it? The Army broke up, and every one was sent to his City as soon as it was known that *Ahab* was dead. And so wilt thou cast off all thought of making any head against Sin and Satan, when thy hope is gone, but fall either into *Judas* his horror of conscience, or with *Cain*, turn Atheist, and bury the thoughts of thy desperate condition, in a heap of worldly projects.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Wherein is contained Six Directions, how the Christian may get Hope *strengthened.*

I Come now to give a few words of counsel, How a Christian may best strengthen his Hope. Take them in these six particulars following.

SECT. I.

First. IF thou meanest thy hope of Salvation should rise to any strength and solidness, study the Word of God diligently. The Christian is bred by the Word, and he must be fed by it also, or else his grace will die. That is the growing child that lies libbing oftenest at the breast. Now as God hath provided food in his Word to nourish every grace, so in the composition of the Scriptures he had a particular respect to the welfare and growth of the Saints hope, as one principal end of their writing; *Rom.* 15. 4. *That we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.* The Devil knows this so well, that his great labour is spent, to deprive the Christian of the help which the Word is stored with; and indeed therein he is not mistaken; for so long as this River is unblockt up which makes glad the City of God, with the succours that are brought in to them on the stream of its precious promises, he can never besiege them round, or put them to any great streights. Some therefore he deprives of their relief by meer sloth and lazines; they make a few fruitless complaints of their doubts and fears, like Sluggards crying out of their wants and poverty as they lie in bed, but are loth to rise, and take any pains to be resolved of them by searching of the Word

for their satisfaction; and these sell their comfort, of all others, the cheapest. Who will pity him, though he should starve to death, that hath bread before him, but loth to put his hand out of his bosome to carry it to his mouth. Others he abuseth by false Applications of the Word to their souls, partly through their weak understandings, and troubled spirits also, which discolour the truths of God, and mis-represent them to their judgements, whereby they come to be beaten with their own staffe, even those promises which a skilful hand would knock down Satans temptations withal. The Devil is a great Student in Divinity, and makes no other use of his Scripture-knowledge, than may serve his turn by Sophistry to do the Christian a mischief either by drawing him to sin, or into despair for sinning; like some wrangling Barreter, who gets what skill he can in the Law, meerly to make him the more able to put honest men to trouble by his vexatious suit. Well, if Satan be so conversant in the Word to weaken thy hope, and deprive thee of thy inheritance, what reason hast thou then to furnish thy self with a holy skill to maintain thy right, and defend thy hope?

Now in thy study of the Word, propound these two ends, and closely pursue them till thou hast obtain'd them.

First, Labour to clear up to thy understanding from the Word, what are the conditions required by God of every soul that hath his grant and warrant to hope assuredly for life and salvation in the other World. Some conditions there are required to be found in all such, is without all doubt, or else it were free for all, be they what they will, and live how they list, actually to lay claim to a right in Heaven and Salvation; if God had set no bounds at *Sinai*, and said nothing who should come up the Mount, and who not, it had been no more presumption in any of the company to have gone up then in *Moses*; and if God requires no conditions in the person, that is, to hope, then heaven is a Common for one as well as other to croud into; then the beastly sinner may touch Gods holy Mount as well as the Saint, and fear no stoning for his bold adventure. But this sure is too fulsome Doctrine for any judicious conscience to digest. Well, having satisfied thy self that if ever thou hast true hope, thou must also have the conditions; enquire what they are. Now the Word holds forth two sorts of conditions according to the two different

cove-

covenants. First, There is a Covenant of Nature, or Law-Covenant, which God made with innocent *Adam*, and the condition of this, was perfect obedience of the person that claim'd happiness by it. This is not the condition now required, and he that stands groping at this door, in hope to enter into life by it, shall not only find it nail'd up, and no entrance that way to be had, but he also deprives himself of any benefit of that true door, which stands open, and by which all pass that get thither; *Galat.* 5. 5. *Whosoever of you is justified by the Law, ye are fallen from grace.* You must therefore enquire what the other Covenant is, and that is a Covenant of Grace, as that other was of Nature; of Reconciliation to make God and man friends, as that was a Covenant to preserve those friends who had never fallen out.

Now the condition of this Covenant, is, Repentance and Faith: See for this, *Luke* 24. 47. *John* 3. 36. *Acts* 2. 38 *Acts* 5. 31. *Acts* 20. 21. *Gal.* 5. 5. Labour therefore to give a firm assent to the truth of these promises, and hold it as an indisputable and inviolable principle, That whoever sincerely repents of his sins, and with a faith unfeigned, receiveth Christ to be his Lord and Saviour, this is the person that hath the Word and Oath of a God, that cannot possibly lye, for the pardon of his sins, and salvation of his soul. What service a strong assent to this will do thee towards exerting thy hope, thou wilt, by and by, see: It is the very basis thereof; the weight of the Christians whole building bears so much on this, that the Spirit of God, when he speaks in Scripture of Evangelical Truths and Promises, on which poor sinners must build their hopes for salvation, he doth it with the greatest averment of any other truths, and usually adds some circumstance or other that may put us out of all doubt concerning the certainty, and unalterableness of them. *Isa.* 53. 5. *Surely he hath borne our griefs*; there is no question to be made of it, but it was our potion he drank, our debt he paid. What end could he have besides this in so great sufferings? Was it to give us a pattern of patience how we should suffer? This is true, but not all, for some of our fellow Saints have been admirable instances of this. Surely there was more than this, *He bare our sorrows, and was wounded for our transgressions.* This, this was the great business, worthy of the Son of God his undertaking, which none of our fellow Saints could do for us. So 1 *Tim.* 1. 15.

This

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. As if he had said, Fear no cheat or imposture here, it is as true as Truth it self; for such is he that said it, If you believe not this, you are worse than a Devil; he cannot shut this truth out of his conscience, though the unwelcomest that ever came to his knowledge, 1 *John* 1. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins.* What can the poor penitent fear, when that Attribute is become his friend, that first made God angry with him? Yea, so fast a friend as to stand bound for the performance of the promise, which even now was so deeply engaged to execute the threatning on him? *Heb.* 6. 17. *Wherein, God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirm'd it by an Oath.* What security could we have askt more of a deceitful man, than the faithful God of his own accord gives? The *Romans* did not give their Magistrates Oaths, supposing the dignity and honour of their persons and place were Bond strong enough to make them true and righteous. Surely then Gods Word would have deserved credit, though it had not an Oath to be its Surety, yet God condescends to this, that he may sink the truth of what he saith, deeper into our minds, and leave the print fairer and fuller in our assents to the same, when set on with the weight of Asseverations and Oaths.

Secondly, Having found what is the condition of the Covenant, rest not satisfied, till thou findest this condition to be wrought in thy own soul, and art able to say thou art this Repenting and Believing sinner. A strong hope results from the clear evidence it hath for both these. We read in Scripture of a threefold Assurance. *First*, An assurance of understanding, *Colos.* 2. 2. *Secondly*, An assurance of Faith, *Hebr.* 10. 22. *Thirdly*, An assurance of Hope, *Hebr.* 6. 11. And it is a good note which an acute *Doctor* of our own hath upon them, 'That these three make
D. A. *Tac.* *Sa.* p. 126. 'up one practical *Sylogisme*, wherein, Knowledge forms the Pro-
'position, Faith makes the Assumption, and Hope draws the
'Conclusion. I do (saith the Christian assuredly) know from the Word, that the repenting believing sinner shall be saved, my conscience also tells me that I do unfeignedly repent and believe, Therefore I do hope firmly that I shall (how ever unworthy o-

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therwiſe) be ſaved. Now we know there can be no more in the Concluſion, than is in the Premiſes; ſo that as the force is which the Chriſtian puts forth in his aſſent to the truth of the promiſe, and the evidence is, which he hath that the condition of the promiſe (*viz.* Faith and Repentance) is wrought in his ſoul, ſo will his Hope be, weak or ſtrong. Indeed it can be no otherwiſe: if his aſſent to the truth of the promiſe be weak, or his evidence for the truth of his Faith and Repentance be dark and uncertain, his Hope that is born (as I may ſo ſay) of theſe, muſt needs partake of its Parents infirmities, and be it ſelf weak and wavering, as they are from which it reſults.

SECT. II.

WOuldſt thou have thy hope ſtrong? Then keep thy conſcience pure. Thou canſt not defile this, but thou wilt weaken that, *Living godly in this preſent world, and looking for the bleſſed hope laid up for us* in the other, are both conjoyn'd, *Titus* 2. 13. A ſoul wholly void of godlineſs, muſt needs be as deſtitute of all true hope; and the godly perſon, that is looſe and careleſs in his holy walking, will ſoon find his hope languiſhing. All ſin is Aguiſh meat, it diſpoſeth the ſoul that tampers with it, to trembling fears, and ſhakings of heart: But ſuch as are deliberately committed and plotted, they are to the Chriſtians hope, as poyſon to the ſpirits of his body, which preſently drinks them up. They, in a manner, exanimate the Chriſtian; They make the thoughts of God terrible to the ſoul, which, when he is in a holy frame, are his greateſt joy and ſolace, *I thought on God and was troubled*, Pſal. 77. 3. They make him afraid to look on God in a duty, much more to look for God in the day of judgement. Can the ſervant be willing his Maſter ſhould come home, when he is in his ryot and exceſs? Mr. *Calvin* when ſome wiſht him to forbear ſome of his labours, eſpecially his Night-ſtudies, asks thoſe his Friends, *Whether they would have his Lord find him idle, when he came?* O God forbid, Chriſtian, that Death ſhould find thee wanton and negligent in thy walking, that he ſhould ſurprize thee lying in the puddle of ſome ſin unrepented of! This would *Direct.* 2.

would be a sad meeting! O how loth wouldst thou then be to dye, and go to the great Audit, where thou must give up thy accounts for eternity! will thy hope then be in case to carry thee up with joy to that solemn work? Can a bird flie, when one of her wings is broke? Faith and a good Conscience are Hopes two wings; if therefore thou hast wounded thy conscience by any sin, renew thy repentance, that so thou may'st act faith for the pardon of it, and acting faith, may'st redeem thy hope, when the morgage that is now upon it, shall be taken off. If a *Jew* had pawn'd his Bed-cloaths, God provided mercifully, it should be restored before Night, *For* (saith he) *that is his covering; wherein shall he sleep?* Exod. 22. 27. Truly Hope is the Saints covering, wherein he wraps himself, when he lays his body down to sleep in the grave, *My flesh* (saith *David*) *shall rest in hope*, Psal. 16. 9. O Christian, bestir thy self to redeem thy hope before this Sun of thy temporal life go down upon thee, or else thou art sure to lie down in sorrow. A sad going to the bed of the grave he hath, that hath no hope of a Resurrection to life.

Sect. III.

3. Resort to God dayly, and beg a stronger hope of him: That is the way the *Apostle* took to help the Saints at *Rome* to more of this precious grace, *Rom.* 15. 13. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.* God you see is the God of hope; and not only of the first seed and habit, but of the whole increment and abounding of it in us also: He doth not give a Saint the first grace of conversion, and then leave the improvement of it wholly to his skill and care; as sometimes a child hath a stock at first to set up, and never hath more help from his father, but by his own good Husbandry advanceth his little beginnings into a great estate at last. But rather as the Corn in the Field, that needs the influences of Heaven to flower and ripen it for Harvest, as much as to quicken it in the clods when first thrown in: And therefore be sure thou humbly acknowledg-

ledgeſt God by a conſtant waiting on him for growth. *The young Lions are ſaid to ſeek their meat from God*, Pſal. 104. 21. That is, God hath taught them, when hungry, to expreſſe their wants, by crying and lifting up their voice, which, did they know God to be their Maker, they would direct to him for ſupply. As we ſee the little babe that at firſt only expreſſeth its wants by crying, doth ſo ſoone as it knows the mother, direct his moan to her; thou knoweſt Chriſtian that thou art at thy heavenly Fathers finding. He knows indeed what thou wanteſt, but he ſtaies his ſupplies till thou crieſt, and this will make him draw forth his breaſt preſently. Doth God take care for beaſts in the field? Surely then much more will he for thee his child in his houſe, and for thy ſoul above all. Thou mayeſt poſſibly pray for more riches, and be denied; but a prayer for more grace is ſure to ſpeed.

SECT. IV.

IF you would ſtrengthen your hope, labour to encreaſe your love. There is a ſecret, yet powerful influence that love hath on hopes *Moſes* we will eaſily grant, greatly befriended the *Iſraelite*, when he ſlew the *Egyptian* that fought with him. Love kills ſlaviſh fear, one of the worſt enemies hope hath in the Chriſtians heart, and thereby ſtrengthens hopes hand. He that plucks up the weeds, helps the corn to grow; and he that purges out the diſeaſe, makes way for natures ſtrengthning. 'Tis ſlaviſh fear oppreſſeth the Chriſtians ſpirit that he cannot act hope ſtrongly. Now, *love caſts out fear*, 1 John 4. 18. The *free-woman* will caſt out the *bond-woman*. Slaviſh fear is one of *Hagars* breed, an affection that keeps all in bondage that hath it; this love cannot brooke. Shall I, ſaith the loving ſoul, fear he will hurt me, or be hard to me, that loves me, and I him ſo dearly? away unworthy thoughts, here is no room for ſuch company as you are in my boſome *Love thinketh no ill*! 1 *Cor.* 13. 5. That is, it neither wiſheth evil to, nor ſuſpects evil of another. The more thou loveſt Chriſt, the leſſe thou wilt be jealous of him; and the leſſe jealous thou art of him, the more ſtrongly wilt thou hope in him, and comfortably wait for him. Hence theſe two graces are

so often mated in Scripture, 2 *Thes.* 3. 5. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and patient waiting for Christ.* Love him, and you will wait for him. So *Jude* 21. *Keep your selves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life.*

SECT. V.

5 BE much in the exercise of your hope. Repeated acts strengthen habits. Thus the little wadling child comes to go strongly, by going often. You have no more money in your chest at the years end than when you laid it there, nay 'tis well if rust or thieves have not made it lesse. But you have more by trading with it than your first stock amounted unto. *Thou shouldest have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury*, said *Christ* to the *slothful servant*, Matth. 25. 27. Now the promises are hopes object to act upon. A man can as well live without aire, as faith and hope without a promise; yea, without frequent sucking in the refreshment of the promises, and therefore be much in meditation of them; set some time apart for the purpose. You that love your healths, do not content your selves with the aire that comes to you as you sit at work in your house or shop, but you will walk out into the fields sometimes, to take the aire more fresh and full. And if thou beest a wise Christian, thou wilt not satisfie thy self with the short converse thou hast by the by with the promises, as now and then they come into thy mind in thy calling, and when thou art about other imployments; but wilt walk aside on purpose to enjoy a more fixed and solitary meditation of them. This were of admirable use, especially if the Christian hath skill to sort the promises, and lay aside the provision made in them sutable to his case in particular. Sometimes the Christian is at a stand when he remembers his past sins, and his hope is quite dasht out of countenance while they stare on his conscience with their grim looks. Now it were excellent for the Christian to pick out a promise, where he may see this objection answered, and hope triumphing over it. This was *Davids* very case, *Psal.* 130. he grants himself

ſelf to be in a moſt deplored condition, if God ſhould reckon with him ſtrictly, and give him *quid pro quo*, wayes ſutable to his work. *If thou Lord ſhouldſt mark iniquities, who can ſtand?* ver. 3.

But then, *ver.* 4. he puts his ſoul out of all fear of God his taking this courſe with poor penitent ſouls, by laying down this comfortable concluſion, as an indubitable truth. *But there is forgiveneſſe with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared.* That is, there is forgiveneſſe in thy nature, thou carrieſt a pardoning heart in thy boſome; yea, there is forgiveneſſe in thy promiſe; thy merciful heart doth not only incline thee to thoughts of forgiving; but thy faithful promiſe binds thee to draw forth the ſame unto all that humbly and ſeaſonably lay claim thereunto. Now, this foundation laid, ſee what ſuperſtructure this holy man raiſeth, *ver.* 5. *I wait for the Lord, my ſoul doth wait, and in his Word do I hope.* As if he had ſaid, Lord, I take thee at thy word, and am reſolved by thy grace to wait at this door of thy promiſe, never to ſtir thence, till I have my promiſed dole (forgiveneſſe of my ſins) ſent out unto me. And this is ſo ſweet a morſel, that he is loth to eat it alone, and therefore he ſets down the diſh, even to the lower end of the table, that every godly perſon may taſte with him of it, *ver.* 7, 8. *Let Iſrael hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he ſhall redeem Iſrael from all his iniquities.* As if he had ſaid, that which is a ground of hope to me, notwithſtanding the clamour of my ſins, affords as ſolid and firme a bottome to any true *Iſraelite* or ſincere ſoul in the world, did he but rightly underſtand himſelf, and the mind of God in his promiſe. Yea, I have as ſtrong a faith for ſuch as my own ſoul, and durſt pawn the eternity of its happineſſe upon this principle, That God ſhall redeem every ſincere *Iſraelite* from all his iniquities. This, this is the way to knock down our ſins indeed; and Satan, when he comes to reproach us with them, and by their batteries to diſmount our hope. Sometimes a qualme comes over the Chriſtians heart meerly from the greatneſſe of the things hoped for. What? ſaith the poor ſoul, ſeems it a ſmall thing for me to hope, that of an enemy I ſhould become a ſon and heir to the great God! What? a rebel! and not only hope to be pardoned, but prove a favourite, yea ſuch a one, as to have robes of glory making for me in heaven, where I ſhall ſtand among thoſe that miniſter about the throne of God in

his heavenly Court, and that before I have done him any more ſervice here on earth? O it is too great good news to prove true. Thus the poor ſoul ſtands amazed, as the *Diſciples*, when the firſt tidings of the *Lords* reſurrection ſurprized them, and is ready to think its hope but an idle tale with which Satan abuſeth it, *ut præſumendo ſperet & ſperando pereat.* That he may preſume to hope, and periſh with his preſumption.

Now Chriſtian, that thou may'ſt be able to ſtride over this ſtumbling block, be ſure to obſerve thoſe prints of Gods greatneſſe and infinitude that are ſtampt upon the promiſe, ſometimes you have them expreſſed, on purpoſe to free our thoughts, and eaſe our hearts of this ſcruple. When God promiſed great things what he would do for *Abraham*, to make them more credible, and eaſily believed, he adds, *I am God almighty*, Gen. 17. 1. and ſo *Iſa.* 55. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* But how can this poſſibly be done, that in the turn of a hand (as it were) ſuch a great favour can be obtained, which among men could hardly be done in a life-time in ſuing for it? O that is eaſily anſwered. He tells you he is not a ſorry man, but a God, and hath a way by himſelf in pardoning wrongs, which none can follow him in; for it is *as far above our Wayes as the heavens are above the earth.* This Chriſtian obſerve, and it will be a key to unlock all promiſes, and let you in unto the untold treaſures that are in them; yea, make the greateſt promiſe in the Bible eaſie to be believed. When ever you read any promiſe, remember whoſe bond it is, the word of no other than God. And when you think of God, be ſure you do not narrow him up in the little compaſſe of your finite apprehenſions, but conceive of him alwayes as an infinite being, whoſe centre is every where, and circumference no where. When you have raiſed your thoughts to the higheſt, then know you are as far, yea infinitely farther from reaching his glory and immenſitie, than a man is from touching the body of the Sun with his hand when got upon a hill or mountain. This is *to aſcribe greatneſſe to God*, as we are commanded, *Deut.* 32. 3. And it will admirably facilitate the work of believing. Suppoſe a poor criple ſhould be ſent for by a Prince to Court, with a promiſe to adopt him for his ſon, and make him heir to his Crown;

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this might well seem incredible to the poor man, when he considers what a leap it is from his Beggars Cottage to the state of a Prince; no doubt if the promise had been to prefer him to a place in an Hospital, or some ordinary pension for his maintenance, it would be easilier credited by him, as more proportionable to his low condition; yet the greatness of the Prince, and the delight that such take to be like God himself, by shewing a kind of creating power to raise some, as it were, from nothing, unto the highest honours a Subject is capable of, thereby to oblige them as their creatures to their service. This I say might help such a one to think this strange accident not altogether impossible. Thus here, should a poor soul spend all his thoughts on his own unmeetness and unworthiness to have heaven and eternal life conferred on him, it were not possible he should ever think so well of himself, as that he should be one of those glorious creatures that were to enjoy it; but when the greatness of God is believed, and the infinite pleasure he takes to demonstrate that greatness this way, by making miserable creatures happy, rather than by perpetuating their miseries in an eternal state of damnation, and what cost he hath been at to clear a way for his mercy freely to act in, and in a word, what a glorious name this will gain him in the thoughts of those he thus exalts. These things (which are all to be found in the word of promise) well weighed, and acknowledged, cannot but open the heart, though shut with a thousand bolts, to entertain the promise, and believe all is truth that God there saith, without any more questioning the same. A taste I have given in one or two particulars (you see) how, the promises may be suited to answer the particular Objections raised against our hope, it were easie here to multiply instances, and to pattern any other case with promises for the purpose; but this will be most effectually done by you, who know your own Scruples better than another can; and be such true Friends to your own Souls, as to take a little pains therein. The labour in gathering a few simples in the field, and making them up into a medicine by the direction of the Physician, is very well paid for, if the poor man finds it doth him good, and restores him to health.

Sect. VI.

6 Sixthly. File up thy experiences of past mercies, and thy hope will grow stronger for the future, *Experience worketh hope*, Rom. 5. 4. He is the best Christian that keeps the History of Gods gracious dealings with him most carefully, so that he may read in it his past experiences, when at any time his thoughts trouble him, and his spiritual rest is broken with distracting fears for the future. This is he that will pass the Night of affliction and temptation with comfort and hope, while others, that have taken no care to pen down in their memories (at least) the remarkable instances of Gods love and favour to them in the course of their lives, will find the want of this sweet companion in their sorrowful houres, and be put to sad plunges; yea well, if they be not driven to think their case desperate, and past all hope. Sometimes a little Writing is found in a mans Study that helps to save his estate, for want of which he had gone to Prison, and there ended his dayes. And some one experience remembred, keeps the soul from despair, a Prison which the Devil longs to have the Christian in. *This I recall, therefore have I hope*, Lam. 3. 21. *David* was famous for his hope, and not less eminent for his care to observe and preserve the experiences he had of Gods goodness. He was able to recount the dealings of God to him; They were so often the subject of his meditation, and matter of his discourse, that he had made them familiar to him. When his hope is at a loss, he doth but rub his memory up a little, and he recovers himself presently, and chides himself for his weakness, *I said, This is my infirmity; But I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high*, Psal. 77. The Hound when he hath lost the scent, hunts backward, and so recovers it, and pursues his Game with louder cry than ever. Thus Christian, when thy hope is at a loss for the life to come, and thou questionest thy salvation in another world, then look backward, and see what God hath already done for thee in this world. Some promises have their day of payment here, and others we must stay to receive in Heaven. Now the payment which God makes of some promises here, is an earnest given to our faith, that the other also shall be faithfully

fully discharged when their Date expires; as every judgement inflicted here on the wicked, is sent as a penny in hand of that wrath, the full summe whereof God will make up in Hell. Go therefore, Christian, and look over thy receipts. God hath promised, *Sin shall not have dominion over you*; no not in this life, *Rom.* 6. 14. It is the present state of a Saint in this life intended there; canst thou find this promise made good to thee? is the power of sinne broke, and the Scepter wrung out of this Kings hand, whom once thou didst as willingly obey, as ever Subject his Prince? yea, canst thou find that he hath but begun to fall by thy unthroning him in thy heart and affections? Do'st thou now look on sin not as thou wert wont for thy Prince, but as an Usurper, whose Tyranny, by the grace of God, thou art resolved to shake off, both as intolerable to thee, and dishonourable to God, whom thou now acknowledgest to be thy rightful Lord, and to whose holy Laws thy heart most freely promiseth obedience? This (poor soul) may assure thee, that thou shalt have a full dominion over sin in heaven ere long, which hath begun already to lose his power over thee on earth. It is observable, how *David* rears up his hope to expect heavens perfect state of holiness, from his begun-sanctification on earth. First, he declares his holy resolution for God, and then his high expectation from God, *Psal.* 17. 15. *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.* Hast thou found Gods supporting hand in all thy temptations and troubles, whereby thou art kept from sinking under them? A *David* would feed his hope for eternal salvation with this, *Psal.* 73. 23. *Thou hast holden me by my right hand:* Now observe Hopes inference, *Ver.* 24. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*

And as experiences carefully kept, and wisely improved, would conduce much to the strengthening the Christians hope on its chief object, Salvation; so also would they lift up its head above all those distracting fears which arise in the Christians heart, and put him to much trouble, from those cross and afflicting providences that befall him in this life. Certainly *David* would have been more scared with the big looks and brag deportment of that proud *Goliah*, had not the remembrance of the Bear and the Lyon which he slew, brought relief to him and kept them down. But he had

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ſlain this uncircumciſed *Philiſtim* in a figure, when he tore in pieces thoſe unclean beaſts; and therefore when he marches to him, this is the ſhield which he lifts up to cover himſelf with, 1 *Sam.* 17. 37. *The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the Lyon, and out of the paw of the Bear; he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philiſtim.* If experiences were no ground for hope in future ſtreights (temporary now I mean) Then they would not have the force of an Argument in Prayer; but Saints uſe their experiences to do them ſervice in this caſe, and make account they urge God very cloſe and home, when they humbly tell him what he hath already done for them, and expect he ſhould therefore go on in his fatherly care over them, *Pſal.* 22. 21. *Save me from the Lyons mouth, for thou haſt heard me from the horns of the Unicorns*: And no doubt a gracious ſoul may pray in faith from his laſt experience, and expect a ſatisfactory anſwer to that prayer, wherein former mercies are his plea for what he wants at preſent. God himſelf intends his people more comfort from every mercy he gives them, than the mercy it ſelf ſingly and abſtractly conſidered, amounts to. Suppoſe (Chriſtian) thou haſt been ſick, and God hath at thy humble prayer pluckt thee out of the very jaws of Death, when thou wert even going down his throat almoſt; the comfort of this particular mercy is the leaſt God means thee therein; for he would have thee make it a help to thy faith, and a ſhore to thy hope, when ſhaken by any future ſtreight whatever, *Pſal.* 74. 14. *Thou brakeſt the head of the Leviathan in pieces, and gaveſt him to be meat to the people inhabiting the Wilderneſs.* God in that mercy at the Red Sea (we ſee) is thinking what *Iſrael* ſhould have to live on for forty years together, and lookt that they ſhould not only feaſt themſelves at preſent with the joy of this ſtupendious mercy; but powder it up in their memories, that their faith might not want a meal in that hungry Wilderneſs, all the while they were to be in it. Experiences are like a cold Diſh reſerved at a Feaſt; ſometimes the Saint ſits down with nothing elſe on his Table, but the promiſe, and his experience; and he that cannot make a ſoul-refreſhing meal with theſe two Diſhes, deſerves to faſt. Be ſure, Chriſtian, thou obſerveſt this in every mercy, what is matter of preſent thankfulneſs, and what is ground of future hope. *Achor* is called *A door of hope*, Hoſ. 2. 15. God when he gives one mercy, he opens a door

door for him to give, and us to expect more mercy through it. God compares his promise *to the rain which maketh the earth bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the Sower, and bread to the Eater*, Isa. 55. 10. Why shouldst thou, O Christian, content thy self with half the benefit of a mercy! When God performs his promise, and delivers thee out of this trouble, and that streight, thou art exceedingly comforted, may be, with the mercy, and thy heart possibly enlarged at present into thankfulness for the same. It is well here is *bread for the Eater*, something that at present feasts thee. But where is *the seed for the Sower?* The Husbandman doth not spend all his Corn that he reaps, but saves some for seed, which may bring him another Crop: So Christian, thou shouldst not only feast thy self with the joy of thy mercy, but save the remembrance of it as Hope-seed, to strengthen thee to wait on God for another mercy, and further help in a needful time.

CHAP. XIII.

An Objection answered with two or three reflections useful for our improving experienecs.

BUT you will possibly say, How can a Saints past-experience be so helpful to his hope for the future, when God (we see) often crosseth the Saints experiences? He delivers them out of one sickness, and takes them away may be with the next; he saves them in one battel without scratch or hurt, and in another, a while after, they are killed or wounded; how then can a Saint ground and bottom his hope from a past deliverance, to expect deliverance in the like streight again? Object.

O First,

Answ. First, There is the same power still in God, that was then; what he did once for thee, he can with as much ease do again; and this is one way thy experiences may help thee. Thou hast seen God make bare his arm, so that except thou think'st that he since hath lost the strength or use of it, and is become at last a God with a lame hand; Hope hath an object to act upon, and such a one as will lift thy head above water. Indeed the soul never drowns in dispair, till it hath lost its hold on the power of God; when it questions whether God will deliver, this is a sad leak (I confess) and will let in a thousand fears into the soul; yet so long as the Christian can use this Pump, I mean, act faith on the power of God, and believe that God can deliver when he pleases; though it will not clear the Ship of his soul of all its fears, yet it will keep it from quite sinking, because it will preserve him in a seeking posture, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*, Mark 1. and for thee to say, God cannot deliver, who hast been an eye witness to what he hath done, were not only to betray thy great unbelief, but to forfeit thy reason as a man also.

2. But Secondly, to give a more close answer to the question. The Saint from his former experiences (even of temporal salvations) may, yea ought not only believe that God can, but also that he will save him in all future streights and dangers of this nature; only, he cannot conclude that he will do it in the same way as in former deliverances. And none I hope will say, if he hath deliverance, that his experiences are crossed, because God doth use another method in the conveighance of it to him. A debt may be fully satisfied, as with money, so with that which is money worth, except the Bond restrains the payment otherwise. Now, there is no clause to be found in any promise for temporal mercies, that binds God to give them *in specie*, or in kind. Spiritual mercies (such I mean as are saving and essential to the Saints happiness) these indeed are promised to be given in kind, because there is nothing equivalent that can be paid in lieu of them; But temporal mercies are of such an inferiour nature, that a compensation and recompence may be easily given in their stead: Yea, God never denies these to a Saint, but for his gain and abundant advantage. Who will say the poor Saint is a loser, whose purse God denyeth to fill with gold and silver, but filleth his heart with contentation? Or the sick Saint, when God saves him not by restoring

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to former health, but by translating to heaven? And so much may suffice for answer to the Objection propounded.

I shall winde up this head with two or three reflexions to be used by the Christian, for his better improving past-experiences, when he is at a plunge.

First, Look back, Christian, to thy past-experiences, and enquire whether thou canst not find, that thy God hath done greater matters for thee, than this which thou now hast so many disquieting fears and despairing thoughts about. I will suppose thy present streight great, but were thou never in a greater, and yet God did at last set thy feet in a large place? Thou art now in a sad and mournful posture, but hath not he brightned a darker cloud than this thou art now under, and led thee out of it into a state of light and joy? Surely thy staggering hope may prevent a fall by catching hold of this experience. Art thou not ashamed to give thy self for lost, and think of nothing but drowning in a less storm, than that out of which God hath formerly brought thee safe to land? See *David* relieving his hope by recognizing such an experiment as this, *Thou hast saved my soul from death, wilt thou not keep my feet from falling?* Psal. 56. 13. Hast thou given me the greater, and wilt thou stand with me for the less. Haply thy present fear (Christian) is Apostacy; thou shalt one day fall by the hand of thy sins, this runs in thy thoughts, and thou canst not be perswaded otherwise. Now it is a fit time to recall the day of Gods converting grace. Darest thou deny such a work to have passed upon thee? If not, why then shouldst thou despair of perseverance! that was the day wherein he saved thy soul, *This day* (saith *Christ* to *Zacheus*) *is salvation come to thy house*, Luke 19.9. And did God save thy soul by converting grace, and will he not keep thy feet from falling, by his sustaining grace? Was it not both more mercy and power to take thee out of the power of sin and Satan, than it will cost him to preserve thee from falling into their hands again? Surely the *Israelites* would not so often have fear'd provision in the Wilderness, had they remembred with what a high hand God did bring them out of *Egypt*. But may be, it is some outward affliction that distresseth thee; is it greater than the Churches was in cruel bondage and captivity? yet she had something to recall, that put a new life into her hope, *Lam.* 3. *God is my portion,*

saith my soul, therefore will I hope. See, she makes a spiritual mercy (because incomparably greater of the two) a ground of hope for temporal salvation which is less. And hast not thou, Christian, chosen him for thy portion? Do'st thou not look for a heaven to enjoy him in for ever? And can any Dungeon of outward affliction be so dark, that this hope will not inlighten? Recall thy experiences of his love to thy soul, and thou canst not be out of hope for thy body and outward condition. He that hath laid up a portion in heaven for thee, will lay out surely all the expences thou needest in thy way thither.

2 Secondly, Remember how oft God hath confuted thy fears, and proved thy unbelief a false Prophet. Hath he not knockt at thy door with inward comfort and outward deliverances, when thou hadst put out the Candle of Hope, given over looking for him, and been ready to lay thy self down on the bed of despair? Thus he came to *Hezekiah*, after he had peremptorily concluded his case desperate, *Isa.* 38. 10, 11. Thus to the Disciples in their unbelieving dumps, *We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel*, Luke 24. 21. They speak as if now they were in doubt whether they should own their former faith or no; hath it not been formerly thus with thee? wert thou never at so sad a pass, the storm of thy fears so great, that the Anchor of Hope even came home, and left thee to feed with misgiving and despairing thoughts, as if now thy everlasting Night were come, and no morning tale more expected by thee? yet even then thy God proved them all Lyars, by an unlookt for surprize of mercy, with which he stole sweetly in upon thee? If so, press and urge this experience home upon thy self to encourage thy hope in all future temptations. What, O my soul! (thou shouldst say) wilt thou again be scared with these false alarums! Again, lend an ear to thy distrustful desponding thoughts, which so oft thou hast found lyars, rather than believe the report of the promise, which never put thy hope to shame, as these have done. The Saints are oft feeding their hopes on the carcass of their slain fears. The time which God chose, and the instrument he used to give the captive *Jews* their Gaol delivery and liberty to return home, were so incredible to them (who now lookt rather to be ground in pieces by those two Mill-stones, the *Babylonian* within, and the *Persian* without the City) that when it came to pass (like

Peter

Peter whom the *Angel* had carry'd out of Prison, *Acts* 12.) it was some time before they could come to themselves, and resolve whether it was a real truth, or but a pleasing dream, *Psal.* 126. 1. Now see, what effect this strange disappointment of their fears had upon their hope for afterward. *First*, it sends them to the Throne of Grace for the accomplishment of what was so marvelously begun, *ver.* 3, 4. *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord.* They have got a hand-hold by this experiment of his power and mercy, and they will not now let him go till they have more; yea, their hope is raised to such a pitch of confidence, that they draw a general conclusion from this particular experience for the comfort of themselves or others in any future distress, *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy; he that goeth forth and weepeth, shall doubtless come again with rejoycing, bringing his sheaves with him,* Ver. 6.

Thirdly, Remember what sinful distempers have broke out in thy afflictions and temptations, and how God hath, notwithstanding these, carry'd on a work of deliverance for thee. So that thou may'st say, in respect of these enemies in thy bosome, what *David* spake triumphantly in regard of his enemies without, that *God hath prepared a table for thee in the presence of thy enemies,* yea of his enemies: while thy corruptions have been stirring and acting against him, his mercy hath been active for thy deliverance. O what a Cordial-draught would this be to thy fainting hope! That which often sinks the Christians heart in any distress, inward or outward, and even weighs down his head of hope that it cannot look up to God for help and succour at such a time, is the sence of those sinful infirmities which then discover themselves in him. How, saith the poor soul, can I look that God should raise me out of this sickness, wherein I have bewrayed so much impatience and frowardness? Or out of that temptation, in which I have so little exercised faith, and discovered so much unbelief? Surely I must behave my self better, before any good news be sent from heaven to me. It is well, poor Christian, thou art so sensible of thy sins as to be thy own accuser, and prevent Satans doing it for thee; yet be not oppress into discouragement by them. Remember, how God hath answer'd the like Objections formerly, and saved thee with a *notwithstanding*; if these could

could have hardned his bowels againſt thee, Hadſt thou been alive, yea out of Hell at this day? Didſt thou ever receive a mercy of which God might not have made ſtoppage upon this very account that makes thee now fear he will not help thee? Or if thou haſt not an experience of thy own at hand (which were ſtrange) then borrow one of other Saints; *David* is an inſtance beyond exception. This very circumſtance with which his deliverance was (as I may ſay) enammel'd, did above all affect his heart, *I ſaid in my haſte, All men are lyars; what ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?* Pſal. 116. 11, 12. He remembred his ſinful and diſtemper'd carriage, and this he mentions, as to take ſhame for the ſame, ſo to winde up his heart to the higheſt peg of thankfulneſs: He knows not how to praiſe God enough for that mercy which found him giving the lye to Gods Meſſenger, even *Samuel* himſelf that was ſent to tell him it was a coming. And he doth not only make this circumſtance an incentive to praiſe, for what is paſt; but layes it down as a ground of Hope for the future, *Pſalm* 31. *I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from thine eyes, nevertheleſs thou heardſt the voice of my ſupplications when I cryed unto thee.* As if he had ſaid, When I pray'd with ſo little faith, that I as it were unprayed my own prayer, by concluding my caſe in a manner deſperate; yet God pardoned my haſty ſpirit, and gave me that mercy which I had hardly any faith to expect: And what uſe doth he make of this experience, but to raiſe every Saints hope in a time of need? *Be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord*, ver. 24.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

An exhortation to them that want this Helmet of Hope.

BE you exhorted that are yet without this Helmet to provide your selves with it. Certainly if you be but in your right wits, 'tis the first thing you will go about, and that with sober sadnesse especially may but three considerations take place in your thoughts. *Vse.*

SECT. I.

HOw deplored a thing it is to be in a hopelesse state. The *Apostle Ephes.* 2. 12. makes him to be *without God*, that is without hope, *having no hope and being without God in the world.* God to the soul is, what the soul is to the body, if that be so vile, and noisome a thing, when it hath lost the soul that keeps it sweet; what is thy soul when nothing of God is in it? *The heart of the wicked is little worth* (saith *Solomon*) and why! but because it hath not God to put a valor on it. If God who is light be not in thy understanding, thou art blinde, and what is an eye whose sight is out fit for, but to help thee to break thy neck? if God be not in thy conscience to pacifie and comfort it, thou must needs be full of horrour or void of sense; a raging devil, or a stupid Atheist: if God be not in thy heart and affections to purifie them, thou art but a shoal of fish, a sinck of sin, If God be not in thee, the Devil is in thee; for mans heart is a house that cannot stand empty. In a word, thou canst not well be without this hope, neither in life nor death; not in life, what comfort canst thou take in all the enjoyments thou hast in this life, without the hope of a better? 1.

A sad Legacy it is which shuts the rebellious child from all claim to the inheritance, Thou hast an estate it may be, but 'tis all you must look for. And is it not a dagger at the heart of thy joy, to think thy portion is paid thee here, which will be spent by that time the Saint comes to receive his? Much lesse tolerable is it to be without this hope in a dying hour; who can without horror think of leaving this world, though full of sorrows, that hopes for no ease in the other? The condemned Malefactor, as ill as he likes his smoaky hole in the prison, had rather be there, than accept of deliverance at the hangmans hand; he had rather live still in his stinking dungeon, than exchange it for a gibbet. And greater reason hath the hopelesse soul (if he understands himself) to wish he may spend his eternity on earth, though in the poorest hole, or cave in it, and that under the most exquisite torment of Stone or Gout, than to be eased of that pain with hells torment. Hence is the sad confusion in the thoughts of guilty wretches, when their souls are summoned out of their bodies: this makes the very pangs of death stronger than they would be, if these dear friends had but a hopeful porting; If the shriek and mournful outcry of some friends in the roome of a dying man, may so disturb him as to make his passage more terrible; how much more then must the horror of the sinners own conscience under the apprehensions of that hell whither it's going, amaze, and affright him? There is a great difference between a wifes parting with her husband, when called from her to live at Court under the shine of his Princes favour, whose return after awhile she expects with an accumulation of wealth and honour: And another whose husband is taken out of her armes to be drag'd to prison and torment.

Is this thy case (miserable man) and art thou cutting thy short life out into chips, and spending thy little time upon trifles, when the salvation of thy soul is yet to be wrought out? Art thou tricking and triming thy slimy carcase, while thy soul is dropping into hell? What is this? but to be painting the door, when the house is on fire; for a man to be curious about trimming his face, when he is not sure his head shall stand a day on his shoulders. It was an unseasonable time for *Belshazzar* to be feasting and quaffing, when his Kingdom lay at stake, and an enemy at the gates. It would have become a wise Prince to have been rather fighting

on

on the Wall, than feasting in his Palace, and fatting himself for his own slaughter, which soon befell him, *Dan.* 5. 30. And it would become thee better to call upon thy God (poor sinner) and lie in tears for thy sins at his foot, if yet haply thy pardon may be obtain'd, than by wallowing in thy sensual pleasures, to stupifie thy conscience, and lay it asleep, by which thou canst only gain a little ease from the troublesome thoughts of thy approaching misery.

Sect. II.

2. Consider: 'tis possible (I do not mean in the way thou art in; for so it is as impossible that thou shouldst get Heaven, as it is that God should be found a lyar) but 'tis possible that thou who art now without hope, mayst by a timely and vigorous use of the means obtain an hope of salvation; and certainly a possible hope carries in it a force of a strong Argument to endeavor for an actual hope. There is never a Devil in Hell so bad, but if he had a thousand Worlds at his dispose (and every one better than this, we so doat on) would exchange them all for such a May-be, yea count it a cheap penny-worth too. It was but a possibility which brought that *Heathen King* of *Nineveh* from his Throne to lie groveling at Gods foot in Sack-cloth and Ashes, and that King will rise up in judgement against thee, if thou do'st not more; for that was a possibility more remote, than thine is; it was spell'd out not from any express promise that dropt from the Preacher to encourage them to humble themselves, and turn to the Lord; for we read of nothing but desolation denounc'd, but from that natural *Theology* which was imprinted on their minds: This taught them to hope, that he who is the chief good, would not be implacable: But you have many express promises from Gods faithful lip, that if you in his time and way seek unto him, as sure as God is now in Heaven, you shall live there with him in glory, *Their souls shall live that seek the Lord*, Psal. 69. 32. Yea there are Millions of blessed ones now in Heaven experimenting the truth of this word; who once had no more right to Heaven, than your selves now have; and that blissful place is not yet crou-

ded so full, but he can and will make room for you, if you have indeed a mind to go thither. There is one prayer which Christ made on earth, that will keep Heaven-gate open for all that believe on him unto the end of the world, *John* 17. 20. *Neither pray I for these, but for all those that shall believe on me through their word.* This is good news indeed: Methinks it should make your souls leap within your breasts, while you sit under the invitations of the Gospel, as the babe once did in *Elizabeths* womb, upon the *Virgin Maries* salutation. Say not then Sinners, that Ministers put you upon impossibilities, and bid you climb a Hill inaccessable, or assault a City that is unconquerable: No, 'tis the Devil, and thy own unbelieving heart, who together conspire thy ruine, that tell thee so. And as long as you listen to these Counsellers, you are like to do well, are you not? Well, whatever they say, know sinner, that if at last thou missest Heaven (which God forbid) the Lord can wash his hands over your head, and clear himself of your blood: thy damnation will be laid at thine own door; it will then appear there was no cheat in the promise, no Sophistry in the offer of the Gospel. What God did tender, he was willing to give, but thou didst voluntarily put eternal life from thee, and thy heart whatever thy lying lips uttered to the contrary, did not like the terms; *My people would have none of me*, Psal. 81. 11. So that when the Jury shall go on thy murdered soul, to enquire how thou camest to thy miserable end; thou wilt be found guilty of thine own damnation, *Nemo amittit Deum, nisi qui dimittit eum.* None loseth God, but he that is willing to part with him.

Now thirdly, Consider the horrid cruelty of this act, for thee by thy incorrigible and impenitent heart, to pull down eternal destruction on thy own head. Oh what a sad Epitaph is this to be found on a mans Grave-stone! Here lies one that cut his own Throat, that unnaturally made away himself! this the man, that the woman, who would not be reclaim'd! They saw Hell before them, and yet would leap into it, notwithstanding the intreaties of Christ by his Spirit and Ministers to the contrary! And the oftner thou hast attempted to do it, and God hath been staying thy hand by his gracious sollicitations; the greater will be thy shame and confusion before God, Men, and Angels, at the last day. God hath set a brand upon those acts of cruelty, which a

man

man commits upon himself, above all other. It would speak a man of a harsh currish nature, that could see his Horse in his Stable, or Hog in his Stye starve, when he hath meat to lay before him; more cruel to hear his servant roar and cry for bread, and deny it; yet more horrid if this were done to a child or wife; but of all (becaus Nature cries loudest for self-preservation) the greatest violence that can possibly be done to the Law of Nature, is to forget the duty we owe to our own life. Oh what is it then for a sinner to starve his soul by rejecting Christ the Bread of Life, and to let out his souls blood at this wide Sluce! This is matchless cruelty! Indeed that which makes the self-murder of the body so great a crime, is, because it doth so eminently (I will not say unavoidably) hazard the destruction of the soul. Oh how unworthy then art thou to have so noble a guest as thy soul dwell in thy bosome, who prepar'st no better lodgings than Hell for it in another World! That soul whose nature makes it capable of being preferr'd to the blisseful presence of God in heavens glory, if thou hadst not bolted the door against thy self by thy impenitency. But alas, this which is the worse murder is most common; They are but a few Monsters, that we now and then hear of, who lay violent hands upon their bodies; at the report of which the whole Countrey trembles, but you can hardly go into any house one day of the week, in which you shall not find some attempting to make away their souls; yea, that carry the very Knife and Halters in their bosomes, (their beloved sins I mean) with which they stab and strangle them; even those that are full of natural affections to their bodies, so as to be willing to spend all that they are worth, with her in the Gospel, on Physicians, when the life of it is in danger; yet are so cruel to their dying damning souls, that they turn Christ their Physician out of doors, who comes to cure them on free cost. In a word, those that discover abundance of wisdome and discretion in ordering their Worldly affairs, you would wonder how rational they are, what an account they will give why they do this, and why that; when it comes to the business of Heaven, and the Salvation of their souls, they are not like the same men: So that were you to judge them only by their actings herein, you could not believe them to be men; and is it not sad, that the soul which furnisheth you with reason for the dispatch of your worldly business, should have no

benefit it ſelf, from that very reaſon which it lends you to do all your other buſineſs with! This, as one well ſaith, is as if the Maſter of the Houſe, who provides food for all his ſervants, ſhould be himſelf kept by them from eating, and ſo remain the only ſtarved creature in the Houſe. And is not this the ſad judgement and plague of God that is viſibly ſeen upon many, and thoſe that go for wiſe men too *ſtilo mundi.* Are not their ſouls which give them underſtanding, to provide for back and belly, houſe and family, themſelves ſtarving in the mean time? being kept by the power of ſome luſt from making uſe of their underſtanding and reaſon ſo far, as to put them upon any ſerious and vigorous endeavour for the ſalvation of them.

EPHES. 6. 17.

And the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

HERE we have the ſixth and laſt Piece in the Chriſtians *Panoply* brought to our hand. *A Sword,* and that of the right make, *The Sword of the Spirit.* The Sword was ever eſteemed a moſt neceſſary part of the Souldiers Furniture, and therefore hath obtain'd a more general uſe in all Ages, and among all Nations, than any other weapon. Moſt Nations have ſome particular Weapons or Arms proper to themſelves; But ἀν or none come into the Field without a Sword. A Pilot without his Chard, a Scholar without his Book, and a Souldier without his Sword, are alike ridiculous. But above all theſe, abſurd is it

it for one to think of being a Christian, without knowledge of the Word of God, and some skill to use this Weapon. The usual name in Scripture for Warre, is the *Sword*, Jer. 25. 29. *I will call for a Sword upon all the Inhabitants of the earth*; *i. e.* I will send Warre. And this because the Sword is the Weapon of most universal use in Warre, and also that whereby the greatest execution is done in the Battel. Now such a Weapon is the *Word of God* in the Christians hand. By the edge of this his enemies fall, and all his great exploits are done, *Rev.* 12. 11. *They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony.*

CHAP. I.

Two notes observed in general from the words, and briefly toucht upon.

THere are two Observables we may take notice of, before we fall to the closer discussion of the words. The first from the kind or sort of Arms that is here presented for the Christians use. The other from the place and order it stands in. 1.

First, from the kind or sort of Arms here appointed for the Christians use, A weapon that is both defensive and offensive, such is the Sword. All the rest in the Apostles Armory are set out by defensive Arms, Girdle, Breast-plate, Shield and Helmet. Such as are of use to defend and save the Souldier from his enemies stroke. But the Sword doth both defend him, and serves to wound his enemy also. Of like use is the Word of God to the Christian. First, It is for defence; easily might the Souldier be dis-arm'd of all his other furniture, how glistering and glorious soever, had he not a Sword in his hand to lift up against his enemies assaults. And with as little a do would the Christian be stript of all his graces, had he not this Sword

Sword to defend them and himself too from Satans fury, *Unless thy Law had been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction*, Psl. 119. 92. This is like the flaming Sword with which God kept *Adam* out of Paradise. The Saint is oft compared to Christs Garden and Orchard: With the Sword of the Word he keeps this his Orchard from robbing. There would not long hang any of their sweet fruit (either graces or comforts) upon their souls, were not this great Robber, Satan, kept off with the point of this Sword. O this Word of God is a terrour to him, he cannot for his life overcome the dread of it. Let Christ say but *It is written*, and the foul Fiend runs away with more confusion and terrour, than *Caligula* at a crack of Thunder. And that which was of such force coming from Christs blessed lips to drive him away, the Saints have alwayes found the most successful instrument to defend them against his fiercest and most impetuous temptations. Ask *David* what was the Weapon with which he warded off the blows this enemy made at him, and he will tell you, it was the Word of God, *Psal.* 17. 4. *Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.* That is, by the help of thy Word I have been enabled to preserve my self from those wicked works and out-ragious practises, to which others, for want of this weapon to defend them, have been hurried. Again, The Sword as it defends the Souldier, so it offends his enemy. Thus the Word of God is, as a keeping, so a killing Sword. It doth not only keep and restrain him from yielding to the force of temptations without, but also by it he kills and mortifies his lusts within, and this makes the victory compleat. A man may 'scape his enemy one day, and be overcome by him at another time: We read of some that for a while escaped the pollutions of the world, yet because their lusts were never put to the Sword, and mortified in them by the power of the Word applyed to their hearts, were at last themselves overcome and slain, by this secret enemy that lay skulking within their bosomes, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. compared with *ver.* 22. *Absalom*, notwithstanding his being hang'd by the hair of his head, might have lived to have taken revenge afterwards, on them by whom he was then beaten, had not *Joab* come in timely, and sped him, by sending his Darts with a message of Death to his heart. We have daily sad experiences of many that wrigle themselves out

of

of their troubles of conſcience (by which for a time they are reſtrained, and their ſins, as it were, held by the hair) to ruſh afterwards into more abominable courſes than they did before; and all for want of skill to uſe, or courage and faithfulneſs, to thruſt this Sword by faith to the heart of their luſts.

Secondly, Obſerve the order and place wherein this piece of Armour ſtands. The Apoſtle firſt gives the Chriſtian all the former pieces, and when theſe are put on, he then girds this Sword about him. The Spirit of God in holy Writ (I confeſs) is not alwayes curious to obſerve method, yet methinks it ſhould not be unpardonable if I venture to give a hint of a double ſignificancy in the very place and order that it ſtands in. *Firſt*, It may be brought in after all the reſt, to let us know how neceſſary the graces of Gods Spirit are to our right uſing of the Word. Nothing more abuſed than the Word; and why? but becauſe men come to it with unſound and unſanctified hearts. The Heretick quotes it to prove his falſe Doctrine, and dares be ſo impudent as to cite it to appear for him. But how is it poſſible they ſhould father their monſtrous births on the pure, chaſt Word of God? Surely it is becauſe they come to the Word, and converſe with it, but bring not the girdle of ſincerity with them, and being ungirt, are unbleſt, God leaves them juſtly to miſs of Truth, becauſe they are not ſincere in their enquiry after it. The Brat is got upon their own hearts by the father of Lyes, and they come to the Word only to ſtand as witneſs to it. Another reads the Word, and is worſe after it, more hardned in his luſts, than he was before. He ſees ſome there Canonized for Saints by the Spirit of God, the Hiſtory of whoſe lives is notwithſtanding blotted with ſome foul falls, poſſibly into thoſe very ſinnes in which he lies wallowing, and therefore is bold to put himſelf into the Saints Calendar. And why ſo impudent to do this? Truly, becauſe he comes to the Word with an unholy heart, and wants the Breaſt-plate of Righteouſneſs to defend him from the dint of ſo dangerous a temptation. Another, for want of faith to give exiſtence to the truth of the threatning in his conſcience, runs boldly upon the point of this Sword, and dares the God of heaven to ſtrike him with it: Thus we find thoſe wretches, mentioned by the Prophet, playing with this edge-tool, *Where is the Word of the Lord? let it come now*, Jer. 17. 15. As if they had 2.

had ſaid mockingly, Thou ſcareſt us with ſtrange Bug-bears, judgements that in the Name of God thou threatneſt, are coming on us. When will they come? we would fain ſee them. Is Gods Sword ruſty, that he is ſo long getting it out of the Scabbard? And the deſpairing ſoul, for want of an Helmet of Hope, deals little better with the promiſe, than the preſumptuous ſinner with the threatning. Inſtead of lifting it up to defend himſelf againſt the fears of his guilty conſcience, he falls upon the point of it, and deſtroyes his own ſoul with that Weapon which is given him to ſlay his enemy with. Well therefore may the Apoſtle firſt put on the other pieces, and then deliver this Sword to them to uſe for their good. A Sword in a mad mans hand, and the Word of God in ſome wicked mans mouth, are uſed much alike, to hurt only themſelves and their beſt Friends with. *Secondly*, It may be commended after all the reſt, to let us know, the Chriſtian when advanced to the higheſt attainments of grace poſſible in this life, is not above the uſe of the Word, nay cannot be ſafe without it. When girded with ſincerity, his Plate of Righteouſneſs on his breaſt, Shield of Faith in his hand, and Helmet of Hope covering his head, that his ſalvation is out of doubt to him at preſent, yet even then he muſt take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. This is not a book to be read by the loweſt form in Chriſts School only, but beſeeming the higheſt Scholar that ſeems moſt fit for a remove to heavens Academy. It is not only of uſe to make a Chriſtian by converſion, but to make him perfect alſo, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. It is like the Architects rule and line, as neceſſary to lay the top-ſtone of the building at the end of his life, as the foundation at his converſion. They therefore are like to prove fooliſh builders, that throw away their line before the houſe be finiſhed.

I come now to take up the Weapon laid before us in the Text, *And the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* In which words obſerve theſe three parts.

Firſt, The Weapon it ſelf, *i.e. The Word of God.*

Secondly, The Metaphor in which it is ſheathed, *The Sword*, with the perſon whoſe it is, *The Sword of the Spirit.*

Thirdly, An exhortation, to make uſe of this Weapon, *And the Sword, &c.* That is, take this with all the other before-named pieces. So that to whom he directs the former pieces,

ces, to theſe he gives the Sword of the Word to uſe. Now thoſe you ſhall find, are perſons of all ranks and relations, Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants, he would have none be without this Sword any more than without the Girdle, Helmet, and the reſt, &c. Though this I know will not pleaſe the Papiſts, who would have this Sword of the Word, like that of *Goliah*, laid up out of their reach, and that in the Prieſts keeping alſo.

CHAP. II.

What is here meant by the Word of God.

Begin with the Weapon it ſelf, *The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* I ſhall firſt hold forth the Sword naked, and then put it again into its ſheath, to handle it under the Metaphor of a Sword. There is a twofold Word of God. Firſt, A ſubſtantial, or ſubſiſting Word, and that is the eternal Son of God. *John* 1.1. *The Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Rev. 19. 13. *And he was cloathed with a veſture dipt in blood, and his name is called the Word of God.* This is ſpoken of a Perſon, and he no other than Chriſt the Son of God. But he is not the Word of God in the Text. The Spirit is rather Chriſts Sword, than Chriſt the Sword of the Spirit: In the 15. *verſe* of the fore-named *Chapter*, *Out of his mouth goeth a ſharp Sword, that with it he ſhould ſmite the Nations.* Secondly, There is a declarative Word of God, and this is manifold according to the divers wayes and manners, whereby the Lord hath been pleaſed to declare his mind to the Sons of men. At firſt, while the Earth was thin ſown with People, and the Age of man ſo voluminous as to contain many centuries of years, God delivered his mind by Dreams and Viſions, with ſuch like immediate Revelations unto faithful Witneſſes, who might inſtruct others of

their present generation therein, and transmit the knowledge of the same to after Ages; They living so long, That three holy men were able, from the death of *Adam*, to preserve the purity of Religion by certain tradition, till within a few years of the *Israelites* going down to *Egypt*. For as a Reverend and Learned pen calculates the *Chronology*: *Methuselah* lived above two hundred years with *Adam*, and from him might receive the Will of God revealed to him. *Sem* lived almost an hundred years with *Methuselah*, and *Sem* was alive to the fiftyeth year of *Isaac's* Age, who died but a few years before *Israels* going into *Egypt*. Thus long God did forbear to commit his Will to Writing, because it passing through so few, and those trusty hands, it might safely be preserved.

But when the age of mans life was so contracted, that from eight and nine hundred years (the then ordinary duration of it) it shrank into but so many Tens, as it was in *Moses* his time, *Psal.* 90. And when the people of God grew from a few persons to a multitude in *Egypt*, and those corrupted with Idolatry: God now intending at their deliverance thence, to form them into a *Polity* and *Common-wealth*, thought it fit (for the preventing of corruption in his Worship, and degeneracy in their lives) that they should have a written Law to be as a publick Standard to direct them in both. And accordingly he wrote the Ten Commandments with his own finger on Tables of stone. And commanded *Moses* to write the other words he heard from him on the Mount, *Exod.* 34. 27. yet so, that he still continued to signifie his Will by extraordinary Revelations to his Church, and also to enlarge this first Edition of his written Word according to the necessity of the times; reserving the *Canon* of Sacred Writ to be finished by *Christ* the great *Doctor* of the *Church*, who compleated the same, and by the *Apostles* his Publick Notaries, consigned it to the use of his *Church* to the end of the world; yea, a curse from *Christs* mouth cleaves to him that *shall add to, or take from the same*, Rev. 22. 18, 19. So that now, all those wayes whereby God directly made known his mind to his people, are resolved into this one of the *Scriptures*; which we are to receive as the undoubted Word of God, containing in it a perfect rule of Faith and Life, and to expect no other Revelation of his mind to us: Which is the meaning of *Hebr.* 1. 2. *God who*

at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last dayes spoken to us by his Son. Therefore called *the last dayes*, because that we are to look for no other Revelation of Gods Will. And therefore for ever let us abhorre that blasphemy of *Joachim*, *Abbas*, *Wigelians*, and others that have faln into the same phrensie with them, who dream of a three-fold Doctrine flowing from the three persons of the Sacred Trinity. The *Law* from the *Father*, the *Gospel* from the *Son*, which we have in the *New Testament*, and a *Third* from the *Spirit*, which they call *Evangelium eternum*; whereas the Spirit of God himself, by whom the Scriptures were indited, calls the Doctrine in it, *The Everlasting Gospel*, Rev. 14. 6. Thus much to shew what is here meant by the Word of God. From whence the Doctrine follows.

CHAP. III.

The Divinity of the Scripture shewn, and the sufficiency of its own Testimony to prove the same.

That the holy Scriptures are the undoubted Word of God. By the Scriptures I mean the *Old* and *New Testament* contained in the *Bible*; both which are that one foundation whereupon our faith is built, *Ephes.* 2. 21. *Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.* That is the Doctrine which God by them hath delivered unto his Church; for they were under the unerring guidance of the Spirit, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.* Θεόπνευστος, breathed by God, it came as truely and immediately from the very

Doct.

mind and heart of God, as our breath doth from within our bodies; yea, both matter and words were endited by God; for the things which they spake, were *not in the words which mans wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth*, 1 Cor. 2. 12. God did not give them a Theam to dilate and enlarge upon, with their own parts and abilities; but confined them to what he endited. They were but his *Amanuenses* to write his infallible Dictate; or as so many *Scribes*, to transcribe what the Spirit of God did before them. This is given as the Reason why no Scripture is to be fenced by our private fancy or conceit; but we are to take the meaning of it from it self, as we find one place clears another; because it came not from the private spirit of any man at first; but *holy men spake as they were moved* (or carried) *by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. 1. 20, *and* 21. verses compared: now *ejusdem est condere & interpretari*, the power that makes the Law, that must expound it.

Quest. But it may be some will say, Do you bring Scripture to bear witness for its self? The question is, Whether the Scripture be the Word of God? and you tell us the Scripture saith so, and is that enough?

Answ. This would carry weight, if it were the word of some sorry Creature that stood upon the tryal; but a greater than man is here: *Humana dicta Argumentis ac Testibus egent: Dei autem sermo ipse sibi testis est, quia necesse est quicquid incorrupta veritas loquitur incorruptum sit veritatis testimonium*: So *Salvian, De Gub. Dei, lib.* 3. Men need Arguments and Witnesses to prove and vouch what they say to be true; but the Word of God is a sufficient witness to it self, because what truth it self (which is pure) saith, can be no other than a sincere and true testimony. Christ, who thought it derogatory to the Dignity of His Person, to borrow credit from mans testimony, did yet refer Himself to the report that the Scripture made of Him; and was willing to stand or fall in the opinion of his very enemies, as the testimony thereof should be found concerning him, *John* 5. *ver.* 34. compared with *ver.* 39. And therefore their testimony may well pass for themselves. He that cannot see this Sun by its own light, may in vain think to go find it with Candle and Lanthorn of humane Testimony and Argument; not that these are wanting, or useless. The Testimony of the *Church* is highly to be reve-

renced,

renced, because to it are these Oracles of God delivered, to be kept as a sacred *depositum* and charge; yea, it is called *the pillar and ground of truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 15. and the *Candlestick*, Rev. 1. 12. from whence the light of the Scriptures shines forth into the World; but who will say, that the Proclamation of a *Prince* hath its authentickness from the Pillar it hangs on in the Market Cross? or that the Candle hath its light from the Candlestick it stands on? The Office of the *Church* is *Ministerial*, to publish and make known the Word of God; but not *Magistorial* and absolute, to make it *Scripture*, or unmake it, as she is pleased to allow or deny her stamp. This were to send God to man for his hand and seal, and to do by the Scriptures, as *Tertullian* saith in his *Apology* the *Heathens* did with their gods; who were to pass the *Senate*, and gain their good-will before they might be esteemed *Deities* by the *People*. And does not the *Church* of *Rome* thus by the Scriptures? sending us to the *Pope* for leave to believe Scripture to be Scripture! The blasphemous speech of *Hermanus* is notoriously known, who said, That the Scriptures did *Tantum valere, quantum Æsopi Fabulæ, nisi accedat Ecclesiæ Testimonium.* O how like is *Rome* to *Rome*! Superstitious *Rome*, to *Pagan* Rome! But we need not travail so far to be determin'd in this case; the Scripture it self will save us the pains of this wearisome journey to so little purpose, being more able to satisfie us of its own divine extraction, than the *Pope*, sitting in his *Porphyry* Chair with all his *Cardinals* about him. Neither is there any necessity to ask for a Messenger to ascend on High, who may from Heaven bring down their Letters testimonial unto us; seeing they bear Heavens Superscription so fairly writ upon their own Forehead, that denies them to proceed from any but God himself. May a particular man be known from a thousand others by his face, voyce, or hand-writing? Certainly then it cannot seem strange that the God of Heaven should be discerned from his sorry Creature, by his voyce and writing in the sacred Scriptures. Do we not see that he hath interwoven his glorious name so in the works of Creation, that they speak His Power and Godhead, and call Him Maker in their thoughts, who never read the Bible, or heard of such a Book? (so that they could not steal the notion thence, but had it from the dictate of their own consciences, extorting the acknowledgment of a Deity.) And much more will an enlightned conscience and sanctified heart be commanded

commanded by the over-powring evidence that shines forth in the Scriptures to fall down and cry, it is the voyce of God, and not any Creature that speaks in them. Indeed the grand truths and chief notions found in the Scriptures, are so connatural to the principles of grace, which the same holy Spirit (who is the inditer of them) hath planted in the hearts of all the Saints, that their soules even spring and leap at the reading and hearing of them, as the Babe did in *Elizabeths* womb, at the Salutation of the *Virgin Mary*. The Lamb doth not more certainly know her Dam in the midst of a whole Flock (at whose bleating she passeth by them all to come to be suckled by her) then the Sheep of Christ know his voyce in the saving truths of the Scriptures; the sincere Milk whereof they desire, and are taught of God to taste and discern from all other. Indeed till a soul be thus inlightned and wrought upon by the Spirit of God, he may have his mouth stpp't by such Arguments for the Divinity of them, as he cannot answer; but he will never be perswaded to rest on them, and cordially embrace them, as the Word of God; as we see in the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who oft were non-plust, and struck down speechless by the dint of Christs words; yet as those wretches sent to attach the *Person* of *Christ*, rose up from the Earth (where the Majesty of Christs Deity looking out upon them, had thrown them groveling) to lay violent hands on Him; so those obdurate *Pharisees* and *Scribes*, after all their convictions, returned to oppose the Doctrine He preached, and that most of them unto death. Yea, that part of the Scripture which they seemed to cry up so highly, the *Law* of *Moses*, and made the ground of their quarrel against Christ; our Saviour is bold to tell them, That as great Admirers as they were thereof, they did not so much as believe it to be the Word of God: How could they indeed have a true Divine Faith on it, who wanted the Spirit of God that alone works it? *John* 5.46. *Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me.* *Erasmus* tells his friend in a Letter, That he met with many things charg'd on *Luther* by the *Monks* for Heresies, which in *Augustine* passed among them for sound truths; but certainly they did not really believe them to be truths in *Augustine*, which they condemned in *Luther*: Neither did the *Pharisees* in truth believe what *Moses* wrote, because they opposed Christ, who did but verifie what *Moses* before from Gods mouth had spoke; but because when the Spirit of God comes

comes to raise the heart to a belief of the Word of God, He doth it by putting His own weight and force to those Arguments which are couched in the Word, and so doth *sigillare animum charactere illorum*, leave the print or character of them sealed upon the soul, therefore I shall draw out an Argument or two among many, that are to be found in the Scripture it self, proving the Parentage thereof to be Divine. I know it is a beaten path I am now walking in, and I shall rather speak ἀλλῶς then ἄλλα, the same things for substance which you may meet in many others, only a little otherwise shaped on my private Forge. For my own part, I think it more wisdom to borrow a Sword of proved mettal at anothers hands, than to go with a weak leaden one of my own into the Field, and so come home well-beaten for my folly and pride.

The two general Heads from which I deduce my Demonstrations, are these: *First*, The matter of the Scriptures. *Secondly*, The supernatural Effects produced by them.

CHAP. IV.

An Argument for the Divinity of the Holy Scriptures, drawn from its Antiquity, and also the sincerity of the Penmen thereof.

1. THE very matter contained in the Holy *Scriptures* demonstrate their heavenly descent; it being such as cannot be the birth or product of a Creature. Let us search the *Scripture* a little, and consider the several parts thereof, and see whether they do not all bear the Image of God upon them. Consider the Historical, Prophetical, Doctrinal, and Preceptive,

Preceptive, with its Appendices of Promises and Threatnings to enforce the same; and see if a print of a Deity be not stamp't upon them all.

First, The Historical part; in which let us consider, *first*, the Antiquity of the matter related. *Secondly*, the simplicity and sincerity of the Pen-men in relating what concerns themselves.

1. For the Antiquity of the matter related. There are some pieces that could not possibly drop from a Creatures pen; where should or could he have his reading and learning to enable him to write the History of the Creation? The *Heathen* (it is confest) by the enquiry of natural Reason, have made a discovery thus far, that the World had a beginning, and could not be from Eternity; and that it could be the workmanship of none but God: But what is this to the compiling of a distinct History, how God went to work in the production thereof, what order every Creature was made in, and how long God was finishing the same? He that is furnish't for such an enterprize, must be one that was pre-existent to the whole World, and an Eye-witness to every dayes work; which, man that was made the last day cannot pretend unto. And yet there is *History* more Ancient then this in the *Scripture*, where we find what was done at the Councel Table of Heaven, before the World began, and what past there in favour of man, whom afterwards he would make. Who could search these Court-Rolls I wonder, and bring us intelligence of the everlasting Decrees then resolved on, and Promises made by the Father to the Son of Eternal Life in time to be conferred on his Elect? *Tit.* 1. 2.

2. The simplicity and sincerity of holy *Pen-men*, in relating what most concerns themselves, and those that were near and dear to them. We may possibly find among *Humane Authours*, some that carry their pen with an even hand in writing the History of others, the making known whose faults casts no dishonourable reflection upon him that Records them: Thus *Suetonius* spared not to tell the World how wicked great *Emperours* were; who therefore is said, To have taken the same liberty in writing their Lives, that they took in leading them. But, where is the man that hath not an hair upon his pen, when he comes to write the blemishes of his own House or Person? Alas, here we find that their pen will cast

no

no ink; they can rather make a blot in their *Hiſtory*, than leave a blot on their own name; they have, like *Alexanders Painter*, a finger to lay upon theſe ſcars; or if they mention them, you ſhall obſerve they learn their pen on a ſudden to write ſmaller then it was wont. But in the *Hiſtory* of the *Scripture*, none of this ſelf-love is to be found; the *Pen-men* whereof are as free to expoſe their own ſhame and nakedneſs to the Worlds view, as any others. Thus *Moſes* brands his own *Tribe* for their bloody murther on *Sechem*, Gen. 34. An enemy could not have ſet the brand heavier on their name than himſelf doth it; his own brother is not favoured by him, but his Idolatry ſet upon the File, *Exod.* 32. The proud behaviour of his dear Siſter, and the plague of God which befell her, eſcapes not his pen, *Numb.* 12. No, not the inceſt of his own Parents, *Exod.* 6. 20. So that we muſt ſay of him, concerning the impartiality of his pen in writing, what himſelf ſaith of *Levi* in the execution of juſtice, *That he ſaid unto his father, and to his mother, I have not ſeen him; neither did he acknowledge his Brethren*, Deutr. 33. 9. In a word, to diſpatch this particular, he is no more tender of his own perſonal honour, than he is of his Houſe and Family; but doth Record the infirmities and miſcarriages of his own life, as his backwardneſs to enter upon that difficult charge, *Exod.* 3. and 4. *Chapters*: Wherein he diſcovered ſo much unbelief and puſillanimity of ſpirit, notwithſtanding his clear and immediate call thereunto by God himſelf. His neglect of a Divine Ordinance in not circumciſing his Child, and what that ſin had like to coſt him; his frowardneſs and impatience in murmuring at the troubles that accompanied his place wherein God had ſet him, *Numb.* 11. *ver.* 11, 12, 13. And his unbelief, after ſo many miraculous ſeals from Heaven ſet to the promiſe of God, for which he had his Leading-ſtaffe taken from him, and the honour of conducting *Iſrael* into *Canaan* denied him; a ſore and heavy expreſſion of Gods diſpleaſure againſt him, *Numb.* 20. 12. Certainly we muſt confeſs, had not his pen been guided by a ſpirit more than humane, he could never have ſo perfectly conquered all carnal affections, ſo as not the leaſt to favour himſelf in reporting things thus prejudicial to

his honour in the World: And the same spirit is found to breath in the *Evangelists* History of the *Gospel*, they being as little dainty of their own names, as *Moses* was; as may be observed in their freedom to declare their own blemishes, and their Fellow-*Apostles*; so far were they from wronging the *Church* with a lame mutilated story of Christs life and death, to save their own credits; that they interweave the weaknesses and sins of one another all along their Relations. Hence we read of the sinful passion and revenge working the sons of *Zebedee*, *Peter* acting the Divels part to tempt his Master at another time. The ignorance of all the *twelve* in some main principles of Christianity for awhile, their ambition who should be greatest, and wrangling about it; their unbelief, and cowardize; one denying his Lord, and the rest flying their Colours, when they should have interposed their own bodies betwixt their Master and the danger, as resolved either to dye for him, or at least with him, and not save their lives with so dishonourable a flight; these, and such like passages declare them to be acted in their writings by a spirit higher than their own, and that no other than of God himself; for whom they so willingly debase themselves in the eyes of the World, and lay their names in the dust, that the glory of his Name might be exalted in their free acknowledgment.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The Divinity of the Scriptures demonstrated from the Prophetick part in it.

2. THE Prophetick part of the Scripture, which contains wonderful predictions of such things to come, as could drop from no pen, but one guided by a Divine Hand, all which have had their punctual performance in the just periods fore-told. Indeed from whom could these come, but God? *Secret things belong to God*, Deut. 29. And predictions surely may pass very well for secrets; they are *arcana ejus imperii*; such secrets, that God offers to take him (whoever he is) and set him with himself in his own Throne, that is able to fore-tell things to come. *Isa.* 41. 23. *Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods.* This must be confessed to be a flowre of the Crown, and an incommunicable Property and Prerogative of the only true God, who stands upon the Hill of Eternity, and from thence hath the full prospect of all things, and to whose infinite understanding they are all present; for his will being the cause of all events, he must needs know them, because he knoweth that. The Divel indeed is very ambitious to be thought able to do this, and to gain the reputation hereof, hath had his mock *Prophets* and *Prophecies* in all Ages; with which he hath abused the ignorant credulous World: But alas, his Predictions are no more true Prophecies, than his Miracles are true Miracles; he puts a cheat upon the understandings of silly souls in the one, as he doth on their senses in the other; for his predictions are either dark and dubious, cunningly pack't and laid, that like a *picture* in *plicis*, they carried two faces under one Hood; and in these Folds the subtile Serpent wrap't himself on purpose to save his credit, which way soever the event 2.

fell out. And this got *Apollo* the name of *Loxias*, of λοξὸς, *obliquus*; *propter obliqua & tortuosa responsa ejus*, because he mock't them that consulted his Oracle with such ambiguous answers, that sent them as wise home, as they came to him. Indeed the Devil found it necessary thus to do, had he not with this patch of policy eeked out the scantness of his own understanding, the nakedness thereof would have been seen by every vulgar eye to his shame, and the contempt of his Oracles. Or if his Predictions were more plainly delivered, they were *first*, of such things, which he spel'd out by the help of natures *Alphabet*, and came to the knowledge of, by diving into the secrets of natural causes, before they discovered themselves unto the observation of mans duller understanding; and this made them be cryed up for wonderful Predictions, and supernatural, by those who could not see this clue in Satans hand that guided him. If a man should meet you in the street, and tell you such a friend of yours will dye within a few Months, whom you left well to your thinking but a few minutes before, and the event should seal to the truth of what he said; you might possibly begin think this a wonderful Propheſie; but when you afterwards know, he that told you, this was a *Physitian* rarely accomplisht, and had upon much study and strict observation of your friends bodily state, found a dangerous disease growing insensibly upon him; you would alter your opinion, and not think him a *Prophet*, but admire him for a skilful *Physitian*. Thus, did we but consider the vastness of Satans natural parts (though limited because created) and the improvement he hath made of them, by the study and experience of so many thousand years, we shall not count his Predictions for *Propheſies*, but rather as Comments and explications of the short and dark Text of natural causes, and acknowledge him a learned *Naturalist*; but not deserving the name of a true *Peophet*. *Secondly*, If he hath not his hint from Natural Causes, then he gathers his Inferences from Moral and Political Causes, which compared together by so deep a Pate as his, give him great help and advantage to infer many times what in very great probability, and all likelihood of Reason will come to pass. Thus what the *Devil* told *Saul* would become of him; his Army and Kingdom, was nothing but what he might rationally conclude from those premises which lay before him, in his being rejected of God, and another anointed by Gods own command to be *King* in his stead, together with the just

just heighth and full measure to which *Sauls* sins might now be thought to have arrived (by his going to a Witch for counsel) and a puissant Army of the *Philistines* preparing against him, whose wonted courage now so failed him, that he went rather like a Malefactour pinion'd and bound with the terrours of his accusing conscience, to meet an Executioner that should give the fatal stroke to him, then like a valiant Captain to adorn and enrich himself with the spoyles of his enemies: All these laid together, make it appear, the Devil without a gift of Prophesie might tell him his doom. *Thirdly* and lastly, God may, and doth sometimes reveal future events to Satan, as when God intends him to be his Instrument to execute some of his purposes, he may, and doth acquaint him with the same some time before; and you will not say the Hang-man is a Prophet, that can tell such a man shall on such a day be beheaded or hang'd, when he hath a warrant from the *King* that appoints him to do that office. Thus Satan could have told *Job* before hand what sad afflictions would certainly befall him in his estate, servants, children, and his own body; because God had granted him a Commission to be the Instrument that should bring all these upon him: But neither *Satan*, nor any Creature else are able of themselves to foretel such events, which neither arise from natural causes, nor may be rationally concluded to follow from Moral and Political probabilities; but are lock't up in the Cabinet of the Divine Will, how they shall fall out: And such are the *Propheſies* which we find in the Holy *Scriptures*, by which they plainly prove their heavenly extraction. They must needs come from God, that tell us what God only knew, and depended on his will to be disposed of. Who but God, could tell *Abraham* where his Posterity should be, and what should particularly befall them four hundred years after his death? for so long before was he acquainted with their deliverance out of *Egypt*, *Gen.* 15. which accordingly came to pass punctually on the very day foretold, *Exod.* 12. 41. How admirable are the Propheſies of *Christ* the *Messias*, in which his Person, Birth, Life and Death, even to the minute, and circumstances of them are as exactly and particularly set down; many Ages before his coming upon the stage, as by the *Evangelists* themselves, who were upon the place with him, and saw all that was done with their own eyes; and though some things foretold of him may be thought, because small and inconsiderable in themselves, not to deserve a mention in so high

high and ſacred a *Propheſie*, as our *Saviours* riding on an Aſs, *Zech.* 9. 9. The thirty pieces given for him, and the purchaſe of the *Potters field* afterwards with them, *Zech.* 11. 12, 13. And the preſerving his bones whole, when they that ſuffer'd with him had theirs broken: Theſe I ſay, and ſuch like, though they may ſeem inconſiderable paſſages in themſelves, yet upon due weighing the end for which they are mentioned, we ſhall find that our weak faiths could not well have ſpared their help to ſtrengthen it in the belief of the Propheſie. Indeed a great weight of the Argument to prove the Truth and Divinity of the Propheſie, moves upon theſe little Hinges; becauſe the leſs theſe are in themſelves, the more admirably piercing and ſtrong muſt that eye be, that could ſee ſuch ſmall things at ſo great a diſtance; none but an infinite underſtanding could do this! And now I hope none will dare to ask, But how may we be ſure that ſuch Propheſies were extant ſo long before their fulfilling, and not foyſted in, after theſe things were done? ſeeing they were upon publick Record in the *Church* of the *Jewes*, and not denied by thoſe that denied Chriſt himſelf. And truly this one conſideration caſt into the ſcale after all the former, doth give an over-weight to the Argument we are now upon. I mean, that theſe Propheſies were ſo long, and that ſo openly read and known, and conſequently impoſſible, that Satan ſhould be ignorant of them, and not take the Alarme from them, to do his utmoſt to impede their accompliſhment, ſeeing his whole Kingdom lay at ſtake, ſo as either he muſt hinder them, or they would ruine it; and that notwithſtanding all this, together with his reſtleſs endeavour againſt them, they ſhould be all ſo fairly delivered in their full time; yea, many of them by the Midwifery of thoſe very perſons, that would, if poſſible, have deſtroyed them in the womb, as we ſee, *Acts* 4. 27. Here breaks out the wiſdom and power of a God, with ſuch a ſtrong beam of light and evideuce, that none of the Scriptures enemies can wiſhly look againſt it.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The divine extraction of the Scripture evident in its Doctrinal part.

THE Doctrinal part of the Scriptures, by which in this place I mean only those grounds and principles of Faith that are laid down in Scripture, and proposed to be believed and embraced of all that desire eternal life. There is a divine glory that is to be seen on the very face of them, being so sublime, that no creature can be the inventor of them. To instance but in a few for all. First, *God* himself, who is the prime object of our Faith. Who but *God* could tell us who and what his Nature is? That there is a *God*, we confess is a Notion that natural reason hath found the way to search out, yea *his God-head and power* are a lesson taught in the School of Nature, and to be read in the book of the creatures; but how long men, who have no higher teaching, are learning the true knowledge of God, and how little progress they make therein, we see in the poor Heathen, among whom the wisest *Philosophers* have been such Dunces, groping about this one principle one age after another, and yet not able to find the door; as the *Apostle* tells us when he saith that, *the world by Wisdom knew not God*, 1 Cor. 1. But as for the *Trinity* of *Persons* in the *God-head*, This is such a heighth, as the heart of man never could take aime at, so much as to dream or start a thought of it; so that if God had not revealed it, the world of necessity must have for ever continued in the ignorance thereof. And the same must be said of all Gospel-Truths, *Jesus Christ*, *God-man*, *Justification* by faith in his blood, and the whole method of grace and salvation through him; They are all such Notions as never came into the heart of the wisest *Sophies* in the

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the world to conceive of; and therefore it is no wonder that a little *childe* under the preaching of the Gospel, believes these mysteries which *Plato* and *Aristotle* were ignorant of, because they are not attain'd by our parts and industry, but communicated by divine and supernatural Revelation: Yea, now they are revealed, how does our reason gize at them, as Notions that are forreign, and meer strangers to its own natural conceptions, yea too big to be grasped and comprehended with its short span? which makes it so malepert (where grace is not Master to keep it in subjection) as to object against the possibility of their being true, because it self cannot measure them. As if the Owle should say the Sun had no light, because her weak eyes cannot bear to look on it. These are truths to be believed, upon the credit of him that relates them, and not to be entertain'd or rejected as they correspond to, or differ from the mould of our reason. He that will handle these with his reason, and not his faith, is like to be served as the *Smith* (it is *Chrysostoms* comparison) that takes up his red-hot Iron with his hand, and not with his tongues, what can he expect but to burn his fingers with them?

CHAP. VII.

The Divinity of the Scripture proved from its preceptive part.

4. THe fourth and last part in our division of the Scripture, is, *The preceptive*, or that which contains commands and precepts. And this will be found to carry the superscription of its Divinity on its forehead, and that with as legible and fair Characters as any of the former. If we do but consider

First, The vast extent of Scripture commands: And

Secondly, Their spotless purity.

SECT.

SECT. I.

First. THe vaſt extent of Scripture commands; which is ſuch as never any humane Laws, though of the greateſt Monarch that ever ſwayed Scepter, could pretend unto. Where is the *Prince* among the ſons of men, that ever went about to give Laws to all mankind, and did not rather, in his Royal Edicts and Laws, reſpect that particular *People*, and thoſe *Nations*, whoſe lot fell within the circle of their *Empire?* Of all the *Empires* the world ever had, the *Roman* was without compare the greateſt, and yet when the *Roman Eagles* wings were beſt grown, they could not overſpread more than the third part of this lower world: And how vain and ridiculous had it been for the *Emperour* to have attempted to make a Law for thoſe *Nations*, which neither knew him, nor he them? But in the Scripture we find ſuch Laws, as concern all mankind, wherever they live, and which have been promulged, where the *Bible* was never ſeen. Their ſound is gone into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. Many of the Laws in *Sacred Writ*, they are but a ſecond, and that fairer Edition of what was found written in the conſciences of men and women before the Scripture came forth. So that if thoſe Laws that are cut with ſo indelible a Character in the conſciences of all the ſons of *Adam*, be of God, then the Scripture muſt be confeſſed to proceed from God alſo. Yet further, as the Scripture takes all mankind to task, and layes its bonds on all, high and low, rich and poor: So its Laws bind the whole man; the heart with its moſt inward thoughts is laid in theſe Chains, as well as the outward man. Indeed the Heart is the principal ſubject, whoſe loyalty is moſt provided for in the precepts of Scripture. Thoſe commands that contain our duty to God, require that all be done with the heart and ſoul; if we pray, it muſt be in the ſpirit, *John* 4. or elſe we had as good do nothing; for we tranſgreſs the Law of Prayer: if it be a Law that reſpects our carriage to man, ſtill the heart is chiefly intended, *Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thy heart*, Levit. 19. *Curſe not the King, no not in thy thought*, Eccleſ. 10. 20. 1.

And accordingly the promiſes and threatnings, which attend

the commands of Scripture (as the Arteries do the Veins in mans body) to inſpirit and enforce them, they are ſuitable to the ſpiritual nature of thoſe commands; the rewards of the one, and puniſhments of the other, being ſuch as reſpect the ſpiritual performance or neglect of them, *Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God*, Mat. 5. Not bleſſed are they whoſe hands are clean, though their hearts be foul and filthy. So, *Mal.* 1. 14. *Curſed be the deceiver, that hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and ſacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing*. The deceiver there is the Hypocrite, that gives God the skin for the ſacrifice, the ſhape of a duty for the ſubſtance, the lean of an outſide obedience, inſtead of the fat of the inward man, *viz.* the obedience of the heart. And as the principal object that theſe are levell'd to and againſt, is the obedience or diſobedience of the Heart; ſo the ſubject or veſſel into which the one emptyeth its bleſſings, and the other its curſes, is chiefly the ſoul and ſpirit, *They ſhall praiſe the Lord that ſeek him, your heart ſhall live for ever*, Pſal. 22. 26. *I will comfort you; and your heart ſhall rejoyce*, Iſa. 66. 13, 14. *Give them ſorrow of heart, thy curſe, O God*, Lam. 3. 65. Now I would fain know the Man that ever went about to form ſuch Laws, as ſhould bind the hearts of men, or prepare ſuch rewards as ſhould reach the ſouls and conſciences of men. Truly, if any mortal man (be he the greateſt of the Worlds Monarchs) ſhould make a Law that his Subjects ſhould love him with all their hearts and ſouls, and not dare, upon peril of his greateſt indignation, to bid a trayterous thought againſt his Royal Perſon welcome in their ſouls, but preſently confeſs it to him, or elſe he would be avenged on him. He would deſerve to be more laughed at for his pride and folly, than *Xerxes* for caſting his Fetters into the *Helliſpont* to chain the ſurly waves with them into his obedience, or *Caligula* that threatned the aire, if it durſt rain when he was at his Paſt-times, who yet, poor ſneaks, durſt not himſelf ſo much as look into the aire when it Thundered. Certainly, a Bedlam would be fitter for ſuch a Mad-man, more than a Kings Throne and Palace, that ſhould ſo far forfeit his reaſon, as to think that the thoughts and hearts of men were within his Territories and Juriſdiction. Who need fear ſuch a Law, when none but the Offendor himſelf, can bring in evidence of the fact? There have been indeed ſome, that intending to take away

way the life of their Prince by a bloody murtherous Knife, have been attached by their own conscience, and forced by it to blab and confess their own wicked thoughts, before any other could be their Accuser, so Sacred are the Persons of Gods anointed ones: But not from the power of Man or his Law, making them do so, but the dread of God arresting their conscience for violating his Law, which indeed not only binds up Subjects hands from killing, but hearts also from cursing Kings in our very thought. This, this is the Law which rules in the consciences of the worst of men; a bit that God rides the fiercest sinners with, and so curbs them, that they can never shake it out of their mouths. Enough to prove the Divinity thereof.

SECT. II.

THe spotless purity of Scripture-commands, do no less evince 2
their divine extraction, *God is the holy one*, Isa. 43. He alone is perfectly holy; *The heavens are not clean in his sight*, Job 15. 15. *He can charge the Angels* themselves (who may be the heavens in the fore-mentioned place) *with folly*, Job 4. 18. because though they never sinned, yet they are sinnable; 'tis possible they might sin, as some of their order have done, if not kept from it by confirming grace. And as God is the only holy Person, so the *Scripture* is the only holy *Book*: All besides this have their *Errata*, which are corrected by this; *The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever*, Psa. 19. 9. That is, the Word of God is clean, called the fear of the Lord, because it teacheth it, as God is called the fear of *Isaac*, because the object of his fear. The Word is clean, and mark, *it endureth for ever*; that is, it ever continues, and shall be found so.

There are dreggs and sediment that will appear in the holyest Writings of the best men, when they have stood a while under the observation of a critical eye; But the *Scripture* hath been exposed to the view and censure of all sorts of men, yet could never have the least impurity charged justly upon it. It is so clean and pure, that it makes filthy souls clean, *Sanctifie them by thy Word, thy Word is Truth*, John 17. 17. That which is it self filthy,

may make our cloaths and bodies clean; but that which makes our souls pure and clean, must be it self without all defilement: And such is the *Scripture:* Nothing there that gratifies the flesh, or affords fuel to any lust. No, it puts every sin to the Sword, and strikes through the loyns of all sinners great or small, *Rom.* 8. 6. *To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.* So that as *Athenagoras* well said, *No man can be wicked that is a Christian, unless he be an hypocrite.* For the *Scripture* which he professeth to be his rule of faith and life, will not allow him to embrace any Doctrine that is false, or practice that is filthy and unholy. This is that which Christianity can alone glory in. The Heathen were led into many abominations by their very Religion, and gods whom they worshipt. No wonder they were so beastly and sensual in their lives, when they served drunken and filthy gods; and the very mysteries of their Religion were so horribly unclean, that they durst not let them be commonly known, as having a scent too strong and stinking to be endured by any that had not their sences quite stopt, and their foolish minds, by the judgement of God upon them, wholly darkned. But the Christian can charge none of his sins upon his God, who tempteth none to evil, but hateth perfectly both the work, and also worker of iniquity. Nor upon his Bible, which damns every sin to the pit of Hell, and all that live therein, *Rom.* 2. 9. *Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour and peace to every man, that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.* O who could be Author of this blessed book, but the blessed God! If any creature made it, he was either a wicked creature, or one that was holy. *First,* No wicked creature could do it; neither Angel nor man. Surely they would never have taken so much pains to pull down their own Kingdom of darkness. (The great plot which runs through the Bible from one end of it to the other.) And if it were the birth of their brain, no doubt as every one loves his own child, so would they have shewn more love to it, than yet they have done. The implacable wrath that the Devil and his party of wicked ones in the world have shewn in all Ages to the Scriptures, declares sufficiently it never came from them. No, no, it cannot stand with the interest of unclean spirits or wicked men, to advance holiness

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in the world. The Devil, though bold enough, durſt never be ſo impudent, as to lay claim to this holy, heavenly piece; but if he ſhould, the glorious beauty of holineſs that ſhines on the face of it, would forbid any man in his wits, to believe that black Fiend to be the father of it. *Naturaliſſimum eſt opus omnis viventis generare ſibi ſimile*, It is natural for every creature to beget his like; and what likeneſs there is betwixt light and darkneſs, it is eaſie to judge. Neither can any holy creature be the Author of it, be he Angel or man. Can we think that any having the leaſt ſpark of love to God, or fear of his Majeſty dwelling in their breaſt, durſt counterfeit his dreadful Name by ſetting it to their work, and abuſe the world with ſuch a blaſphemy and prodigious lye, as to ſay, *Thus ſaith the Lord*, and prefix his Name all along, when not God, but themſelves are the Authors? Could this impudence and audacious wickedneſs proceed from any holy Angel or Man? Doubtleſs it could not. Nay further, durſt any holy creature put ſuch a cheat upon the world, and then denounce the wrath and vengeance of God againſt thoſe who ſhall ſpeak in Gods Name, but were never ſent of him, as the Scripture mentions? Certainly, that earth which ſwallowed up *Corah* and his ungodly rout, for pretending to an authority from God as good as the *Prieſts*, to offer incenſe, would not have ſpared *Moſes* himſelf, if he had ſpoke that in Gods Name which he had not from him, but was the invention of his own private brain. Thus we ſee no creature, good or bad, Angel or Man, can be the Author of the Scripture, ſo that none remains but God to own it, which he hath done with Miracles enough to convince a very Atheiſt of their Divinity.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The Heart-searching Property of the Scriptures.

2. THe Second Argument I shall chuse to demonstrate the divine extraction of the Scriptures, shall be taken from the supernatural effects they produce. Nothing can be the cause of an effect higher and greater than it self; if therefore we can find such effects to be the product of the Scriptures, as are above the sphear of any creatures activity, it will then be evident, that the Scripture its self is supernatural, not the word of a meer creature, but of God himself. What the *Psalmist* saith of *Thunder*, that loud voice of Nature from the clouds, we may apply to the voice of God speaking from heaven in the Scripture, *It is a mighty voice, and full of Majesty*; *It breaketh the Cedars*, Kings and Kingdoms, *it divideth the flames of fire.* The holy Martyrs have with one Bucket of this spiritual water, quenched the scorching flames of that furious element into which their persecuting enemies have thrown them: *It shaketh the Wilderness* of the wilde wicked world, making the stout hearts of the proudest sinners to tremble like the leaves of the trees with the winde; and bringeth the pangs of the new-birth upon them, whose hearts before never quailed for the most prodigious crimes. *It discovereth the Forrests*, and hunts sinners out of their Thickets and Refuges of lyes, whither they run to hide themselves from the Hue and Cry of divine vengeance. But to speak more particularly and distinctly, there are four powerful and strange effects, which the Word puts forth upon the hearts of men, all which will evince its divine original.

1 *First*, It is a heart-searching power, whereby it ransacks and rifles the consciences of men: It looks into the most secret transactions of the heart, and tells us what we do in our Bed-Chamber.

ber. As *Eliſha* did by the *King* of *Syria*, 2 King. 6. 12. It cometh where no Princes Warrant can impower his Officer to ſearch (I mean the heart.) We read that *Chriſt* came to his Diſciples *when the doors were ſhut, and ſtood in the midſt of them*, John 20. 19. Thus the Word (when all doors are ſhut, that men can have no intelligence what paſſeth within the breaſts of men) comes in upon the ſinner without asking him leave, and ſtands in the midſt of his moſt ſecret plots and counſels, there preſenting it ſelf to his view, and ſaith to him as *Eliſha* to *Gehazi*, *Went not my eye with thee, when thou didſt this and that?* How often doth the ſinner find his heart diſcovered, and laid out of all its folds by the Word preached, as if the Miniſter had ſtood at his Window, and ſeen him what he did within doors, or ſome had come and told Tales of him to the preacher? Such I have known, that would not believe to the contrary, but that the Miniſter had been informed of their pranks, and ſo levell'd his diſcourſe particularly at their breaſts, when he hath been as ignorant of their doings, as of theirs that live in *America*, and only ſhot his Reproofs like him that ſmote *Ahab*, who drew his bow at a venture, without taking aim at the perſon of any. From whence can this property come, but God, who claims it as his own incommunicable Attribute, *Jer.* 17. 10. *I the Lord, ſearch the heart.* God is in the Word, and therefore it findeth the way to get between the joynts of the Harneſs, though ſent at random out of mans bow. If any creature could have free ingreſs into this retyring room of the heart, the Devil being a ſpirit, and of ſuch a piercing, prying eye, were the moſt likely to be he, yet even he is lockt out of this room, though indeed he can peep into the next. Now if God can only ſearch the heart, then that Word which doth the ſame, can come from no other but God himſelf. Who indeed can make a Key to this Lock of the heart, but he that knoweth all the Wards of it? Suppoſe you did lock up a ſumme of money in a Cabinet, and none but one in all the world beſides your ſelf were privy to the ſecret place where you lay this Key; if you then ſhould find the Key taken away, and the Cabinet opened and rifled, you would ſoon conclude whoſe doing it was. Why thus, when you find your heart diſcloſed, and the ſecret thoughts therein laid open unto you in the Word, you may eaſily conclude, that God is in it, the Key that doth this, is of his

his making who is the only one beſides your ſelves that is privy to the counſels of your hearts, that ſeeth all the ſecret traverſes of your inward man: Who but he can ſend a Spie ſo directly to your hiding place, where you have laid up your treaſures of darkneſs out of the worlds ſight? There are two ſecrets that the Word diſcloſeth.

Firſt, What a mans own heart knoweth, and no creature beſides: Thus *Chriſt* told the woman of *Samaria*, what her Neighbours could not charge her with; from which ſhe concluded him to be a Prophet, a man of God: And may we not conclude the Scripture to be the Word of God, that doth the ſame?

Secondly, Thoſe things which a mans own heart is not privy to: *God* is ſaid to be *greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things*, 1 Joh. 3.20. He knows more by us, than we by our ſelves: And doth not the Word dive to the bottom of the heart, and fetch up that filth thence, which the eye of the conſcience never had the ſight of before, nor ever could without the help of the Word? *Romans* 7. 7. *I had not known luſt, except the Law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.* And if the Word findeth that out which eſcapeth the ſcrutiny of a mans own heart, doth it not prove a Deity to be in it? So argueth the *Apoſtle*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 25. ſpeaking of the power the Word preached hath to lay open the heart, *Thus are the ſecrets* (ſaith he) *of his heart made manifeſt: And ſo falling down on his face, will worſhip GOD, and report that GOD is in you of a truth.*

CHAP. IX.

The property of the Word to awaken and terrifie the Conscience.

THE second effect the Scripture hath upon the spirits of men, by which its divine pedegree may be proved, is, the power it exerciseth on the conscience to convince and terrifie it: Conscience is a Castle that no batteries but what God raiseth against it, can shake; no power can command it to stoop, but that which heaven and earth obey. He that disarms the strong man, must be stronger than he: He that masters the conscience, must be greater than it, and so God only is, 1 *Joh.* 3. 12. Now the Word being able to shake and shatter this power of the soul, which disdaineth to stoop to any but God, must needs be from him: And that the Word exerts such a power upon the conscience, who will doubt? Do we not see it dayly chastising the proudest sinners, even to make them cry and whine under its convictions, like a child under the Rod? Yea, doth it not slay them out-right, that they fall down dispirited at one Thunder-clap of the Law let off by God upon them? *When sin revived, I died*, saith *Paul*. He who before was a jolly man, as well provided in his own opinion for his spiritual estate, as *Job* was for his outward, when he had his Flocks and Herds, Sonnes and Daughters, Health and Prosperity, all as yet untoucht by the hand of God; but when the Law came to charge sin home upon him, it stript his conscience as naked as *Job* afterward was in his outward condition: The mans eyes are opened now to see how naked and void of all holiness he is, yea his fair skin of *Pharisaical* strictness, with the beauty of which he was formerly so far in love, as if he had been another *Absalom*, without mole or wart, he now judgeth it to be but odious deformity, and himself a most loathsome creature, by reason of those plague-sores and

ulcers, that he sees running on him. Yea, such power the Word had upon him, that it laid him trembling over the bottomless pit, in a despaire of himself, and his own righteousness.

Hath any creature an arm like this of the Word? or can any book penned by the wit of man, command the heart to tremble at the rehearsal thereof, as this can do? Even a *Felix* on the Bench, when a poor prisoner preacheth this Word at the Bar to him, is put into a shaking fit. Who but a God could make those Monsters of men, that had padled in the blood of Christ, and who scorn'd his Doctrine so as to count the Professours of it Fools and Idiots, yet come affrighted in their own thoughts, at a secret prick given them in *Peters* Sermon, and cry out in the open Assembly, *Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?* Doth not this carry as visible a print of a Deity, as when *Moses* clave the Rock with a little Rod in his hand?

Quest. *But haply, you will say, If there be such a conscience-shaking power in the Word, how comes it to pass, that many notorious sinners sit so peaceably, and sleep so soundly under it? They read it at home, and hear it preacht powerfully in the publick, yet are so far from feeling any such earth-quake in their consciences, that they remain senceless and stupid; yea, can laugh at the preacher for his pains, and shake off all the threatnings denounced, when Sermon is done, as easily as the Spanniel doth the water when he comes out of the River.*

Answ. First, I answer, many sinners who seem so jocund in your eyes, have not such merry lives as you think for. A book may be fairly bound and gilded, yet have but sad storyes writ within it: Sinners will not tell us all the secret rebukes that conscience from the Word gives them. If you will judge of *Herod* by the jollity of his Feast, you may think he wanted no joy; but at another time we see that *John*'s ghost walked in his conscience: And so doth the Word haunt many a one, who to us appear to lay nothing to heart; in the midst of their laughter their heart is sad; you see the lightning in their face, but hear not the Thunder that rumbles in their conscience.

Secondly, It is enough, that the Word doth leave such an impression upon the conscience of any (though not of all) to prove its divinity; one Affirmative Testimony speaketh louder for

for the proof of a thing, than many Negatives do to the contrary. The Word is not a phyſical inſtrument, but moral, and works not by a vertue inherent in it, but power impreſſed on it by the Spirit of God that firſt indited it; and this power he putteth forth according to his own good pleaſure; ſo that the ſame Word ſets one man a trembling, and leaves another (in the ſame ſeat may be) as little moved by it as the Pillar he leaneth on. Thus as two at a Mill, ſo at a Sermon, one is taken, and the other left; one is humbled, and another hardned; not from any impotency in the Word, but freeneſs of Gods diſpenſing it: His meſſage it ſhall do to whom it is ſent, and none elſe. It is as a man ſtrikes with a Sword, back or edge, a ſtrong or weak blow, that makes it cut or not, gives a ſlight wound or deep. The Word pierceth the conſcience according to the force and divine power that is impreſſed on it. The three children walked in the fire, and were not ſinged, others were conſumed as ſoon as they came within the ſcent of it. Shall we ſay, That fire is not hot, becauſe one was burnt, and the other not? Some their conſciences do not ſo much as ſmell of the Word, though the flames of the threatning fly about their ears, others are ſet all on fire with the terrors of it.

Thirdly, The ſenceleſs ſtupidity of ſome under the ſtroke of the Word, is not to be imputed to its impotency, but to the juſt judgment of God, wherewith he plagueth them for ſinning againſt the convictions thereof, for commonly they are of that ſort, whoſe conſciences are ſo impenitrable, the withering curſe of God having light upon them, no wonder their judgments are darkned, and conſciences ſeared. It was as great a manifeſtation of Chriſts power (and his Diſciples judged it ſo) when with two or three words the Fig-tree was blaſted, as if he had cauſed it to ſpring and ſprout when withered and dry. The power of God is as great in hardning *Pharaoh's* heart, as in melting *Joſiah's*.

CHAP. X.

The comforting property of the Word to bleeding Consciences.

3dly. IT'S power to comfort and raise a dejected spirit. Conscience is Gods prison in the Creatures own bosome, from whence none can have his release, except by his Warrant that made the *Mittimus*, and committed him thither. Indeed he is a weak *Prince*, that hath no prison to commit offenders into, but what another can break open. This where God layes sinners in Chains, is not such: *A wounded Spirit (saith Solomon) who can bear?* Yea, and who can cure? If any Creature could, surely then the Divels were as able as any to do it: But we see they have not to this day found the way to shake off those Fetters which God keepeth them in; but lie roaring under the unspeakable torment of Gods wrath; and they who cannot cure their own wounds, are like to be but poor Physitians to help others; indeed they acknowledge it beyond their skill and power: *Wherefore dost thou ask of me* (said the *Divel* to *Saul*) *seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thy enemy?* 1 Sam. 28. 16. The distress of an afflicted conscience, ariseth from the dismal sense of divine wrath for sin; now none can remove this, but he that can infallibly assure the soul of Gods pardoning mercy; and this lies so deep in Gods heart, that God alone (who only knoweth his own thoughts) can be the Messenger to bring the News; and therefore the Word which doth this, can come from none but him; and that it is able not only to do this, but also to fill the soul with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, is a truth so undoubted, that we need not ascend up to Heaven for further confirmation; that Spirit which first indited the Word, hath sealed it to the hearts of innumerable Believers. Indeed all the Saints acknowledge their comfort

fort and peace to be drawn out of these Wells of Salvation. *In the midst of my perplexed thoughts, thy comforts delight my soul,* Psal. 119. Nay, he doth not only tell us his own experience, whence he had his joy, but others also to have had theirs from the same Tap. *Psal.* 107. 17. *Fools because of Transgression are afflicted.* And what then can ease them? Will all the Rarities that can be got by Sea or Land, make a diversion to their thoughts, and ease them of their pain? No; for *their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw near to the Gates of death,* ver. 18. What Cordial then have they left to use, or way to take for their relief? Truly none, but to betake themselves to prayers and tears, *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he saveth them out of their distresses,* ver. 19. And with what Key doth God open their prison-door? it follows *ver.* 20. *He sent his Word, and healed them.* If you shall say all this is meant of outward trouble; yet surely you must grant it holds more strong concerning that which is inward: What, but a word from Gods mouth can heal a distressed spirit, when the body pineth and languisheth, till God speaketh a healing word unto it?

Great and mighty things are spoken of thee, and done by thee O Holy Word! Thou out-vieſt the Worlds joy, and makeſt the soul that hath but tasted thy strong consolations presently to disrelish all sensual delights, as flashy and frothy; so pure and powerful is the light of that joy which thou kindleſt in the Saints bosome, that it quencheth all sinful carnal joy with its beams, as the Sun doth the fire on the Hearth. Thou conquereſt the horrour of death, that it is not feared. Thou vanquisheſt the pains thereof, that they are not felt. Thou treadeſt on Scorpions and Serpents, and they have no power to sting or hurt those that believe in thee: Divels know thee, and flee before thee, quitting at sight of thee, their holds, and leave those consciences which they had so long under their Power and Tyranny, for thee to enter with thy sweet consolations. Thou quencheſt the flames of hell it self, and makeſt the soul that even now was thrown bound by despair into the fiery furnace of Gods wrath, to walk comfortably and unsinged amidst the thoughts thereof. Thou bringeſt Heaven down to Earth, and giveſt the believing soul a prospect of that heavenly *Jerusalem*, which is so far off, as if he were walking in the blessed streets thereof; yea, thou entertaineſt him with the same delicacies, which glorified

Saints

Saints (though more fully) feed on, so that sometimes he forgetteth he is in the body, even when pains and torments are upon him. This have the Saints experimented, and more then my pen or their own tongue can expresse; so that we may say to him, that yet questions whence the *Scriptures* came, as *the blind man* cured by *Christ* did to the *Pharisees*, John 9. 30. *This is a marvellous thing* (saith he) *that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes:* So here, This is marvellous, yea ridiculous, to say we know not whence the Scripture is, when it can do all this; since the World began was it not heared, that the word of a meer Creature could remove Mountains of despairs, and fill the souls of poor sinners with such joy and peace, in spight of Hell, and the Creatures own unbelief, under the weight of which, as a heavy grane stone, he lay buried and sealed.

CHAP. XI.

The *converting power of the Word.*

4. 4thly, THE work of Conversion, which none but God, (who is the *God of all grace*) can produce. When *Johns* Disciples came to Christ to be resolved who he was, whether the *Messias* or not, *Matth.* 11.4. *Christ* neither tells them he was, or was not he; but sends them to take their answer from the marvellous works he did. *Go* (saith he) *and shew John again those things which you do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the Lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them:* Εὐαγγελίζονται, are *Gospellized*: That is, they are transformed into the very nature of the Gospel, and acted by the Spirit which breaths in the Gospel. By all which instances Christs drift was, to give an ocular Demonstration of their faith, that he, who did such miracles, could be no other than he whom they sought; and that, which brings up the Rear, is the

the converting power of the Word, not ſet laſt, becauſe the leaſt among them; but rather becauſe it is the greateſt wonder of them all, and comprehends in it all the other; when ſouls are converted, the blind receive their ſight; *you were darkneſs, but now light in the Lord.* The lame walk, in that the affections (the ſouls feet) are ſet at liberty, and receive ſtrength to run the wayes of God with delight. Lepers are cleanſed, in that filthy luſts are cured, and foul ſouls are ſanctified; and ſo of the reſt. Now though the former miracles ceaſe, yet this which is the greateſt, ſtill accompanying the Word, affords ſuch a Demonſtration for its Divinity, as Reaſon it ſelf cannot oppoſe: Is it not beyond the skill and ſtrength of the mightieſt *Angel*, to make the leaſt pile of graſs in the Field? much more the new Creature in the heart, the nobleſt of Gods works.

That therefore which doth thus new mould the heart, and make the Creature as unlike to his former ſelf, as the *Lamb* is to the *Wolf*, and the *Oxe* to the *Lyon*; the one meek and harmleſs, the other fierce and ravenous; that muſt needs be from God; and ſuch changes are the daily product of the *Word*. How many have you known once under the power of their luſts, throwing like mad men their fire-brands about, poſſeſt with ſo many Devils as ſins, and hurried hither and thither by theſe furies; yet at the hearing of one Goſpel-Sermon, have you not ſeen them quite metamorphized, and with him in the *Goſpel* (out of whom the Devil was caſt) ſitting at *Jeſus* his feet in their right mind, bitterly bewayling their former courſe, and hating their once-beloved luſts, more then ever they were fond of them? I hope ſome of you that read theſe lines, can ſay thus much concerning your ſelves, as the *Apoſtle* doth of himſelf, and others of his Brethren, *Titus* 3.3. *We our ſelves alſo were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures*, &c. *But after that the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour appeared, he ſaved us by the waſhing of Regeneration*, &c. And can you, who are the very *Epiſtle* of *Chriſt*, writ not with ink, but with the *Spirit* of the *living God*, in the fleſhly Tables of your hearts, ſtand yet in doubt whether that Word came from God, which is thus able to bring you home to God? How long might a man ſit at the foot of a *Philoſopher*, before he ſhould find ſuch a commanding power go forth with his Lectures of Morality, to take away his old heart full of luſts (as the Sea is of creeping things innumerable) and put a new and holy one in the room of it? Some indeed

indeed in their *School* have been a little refined from the dregs of sensuality, as *Polemo*, who went a Drunkard to hear *Plato*, and returned a temperate man from his Lecture; and no wonder if we consider what violence such broad and beastly sins offer to the very light of a natural conscience; that lesser light appointed by God to rule the night of the Heathen World: But take the best *Philosopher* of them all, and you shall find sins that are of a little finer spinning (such as spiritual wickednesses and heart-sins are) that are acted behind the Curtain, in the retiring Room of the inner man; these were so far from being the spoyles of their victorious Arms, that they could never come to the sight of them. But the *Word* treads on these *high places* of spiritual wickednesses, and leaves not any strong hold of them untaken. It pursues sinne and Satan to their boggs and fastnesses, it digs the sinners lusts like Vermine out of their Holes and Burrows, where they earth themselves. The heart it self is no safe Sanctuary for sin to sit in, the Word will take it thence (as *Joab* from the Horns of the Altar) to slay it; those corruptions that escaped the Sword of the Moralist, and honest Heathen, even these fall by the edge of the Word. I cannot give a better instance for this converting power of the Word, than by presenting you with the miraculous victories obtained by it over the hearts of men, when the *Apostles* were sent out first to preach the grace of Christ, and as it were, to begin the *Combination* of the *Gospel-Ministry*, wherever they came, they found the World up in Arms against them, and the *black Prince* of it, the *Devil* at the Head of their Troops, to make their utmost resistance against them; yet what unheard-of victories were got by them? Was it not strange, that without drawing any other Sword, then the *everlasting Gospel*, they should turn the World upside down, as their enemies themselves confessed? slighting the Devils works, casting down his holds wherever they came, and overcoming those barbarous Heathens, whom the Devil had held in his peaceable possession so many thousand years! to renounce their Idolatries in which they had been bred, and train'd up all their dayes, to receive a new Lord, and him a crucified Jesus, and this at the report of a few silly men, loaden with the vilest reproaches that the wit of man could invent, or malice rake together, to besmear their persons, and render the Doctrine they preached, odious to the World: This, I say, is such an unheard of Conquest, as could not be

be obtained by any less than the arm of the Almighty: Especially if we cast in two or three circumstances to give a further accent to the heighthning of this consideration: As

First, The meanness of the persons imployed to preach this Doctrine; mean in their condition and rank, being of the floor and lowest of the people, and many of them as mean in their intellectual accomplishments, as external port and garb in the world, having no help from humane learning to raise their parts, and set a varnish upon their discourses. Men very unfit for such an enterprize (God knows) had the stress and success of their works depended on their own furniture, which put their very enemies to a stand whence they had their wisdom; knowing well, how low their Parentage, and unsuitable their breeding were to give them any advantage toward such a high undertaking, *Acts* 4. 13. Surely these poor men could contribute no more by any thing that was their own, to that wonderful success which followed their labours, then the blowing of the Ramms Horns could to the laying of *Jericho*'s Walls flat with the ground, or the sounding of *Jehoshaphat*'s musical instruments to the routing of so formidable an Army of his enemies, so that we must attribute it to the breath of God, by which they sounded the Trumpet of the Gospel, and his sweet Spirit charming the hearts of their Hearers, that such mighty works were done by them.

Secondly, if we consider the nature of the Doctrine they held forth and commended to the world, which was not only strange and new, enough to make the Hearers shy of it, but so contrary to the humour of mans corrupt nature, that it hath not one thought in the sinners heart to befriend it. No wonder indeed, that *Mahomet*'s spiced Cup went down so glib, it being so lustious and pleasiug to mans carnal palate. We are soon woed to espouse that for Truth, which gratifies the flesh, and easily perswaded to deliver up our selves into the hands of such opinions as offer fair quarter to our lusts, yea promise them satisfaction. Indeed we cannot much wonder to see Christianity it self generally and readily embraced, when it is presented in *Romes* whorish dress, with its purity adulterated, and its power emasculated; but take the Doctrine of the Gospel in its own Native excellency, before it falls into these Hucksters hands, and it is such as a carnal heart cannot like, because it layes the Axe to the root of every

ſin, and bids defiance to all that take part with it: It will ſuffer no Religion to ſet her Threſhold by its: This may make us ſtep aſide (as *Moſes* once to behold the buſh) to ſee this great wonder, A Doctrine believed and embraced, that is pure Nonſence to carnal Reaſon, teaching us to be ſaved by anothers righteouſneſs, wiſe with anothers wiſdom, to truſt in him as a God, that was himſelf a child, to relye on him to deliver us from the power of Sin and Satan, that fell himſelf under the wrath of men. O how great a gulf of Objections which Reaſon brings againſt this Doctrine, muſt be ſhot, before a man can come to cloſe with it! And yet this Doctrine to find ſuch welcome that never any *Prince* at the beat of his Drumm had his Subjects flock more in throngs to liſt themſelves in his Muſter-role, than the *Apoſtles* had multitudes of Believers offering themſelves to come under baptiſm, the Military Oath given by them to their Converts.

Thirdly, Adde but one more, conſider how little worldly encouragement this Word they preached, gave to its Diſciples; and you will ſay, God was in it of a truth. Had it been the way to thrive in the world to turn Chriſtian, or had it won the favour of Kings and Princes to have been their Diſciple, and taught them how to climb the Hill of Honour, we could not have wondered to have ſeen ſo many worſhip the riſing Sun, but alas the Goſpel which they preached, comes not with theſe bribes in its hand, no golden Apples thrown in the way to intice them on, Chriſt bids his Diſciples ſtoop not to take up Crowns for their Heads, but a Croſs for their Backs, *If any one will be my Diſciple, let him deny himſelf, take up his Croſs and follow me.* They muſt not dream of getting the worlds treaſure, which they have not, but prepare to part with what they have: To be ſure when the *Apoſtles* preached it, the way it led to, was not to Princes Palaces with their preferments, but to Priſons and Dungeons, Racks and Gibbets; now to ſee poor creatures ſo far to forget all their worldly intereſt, eſtates and honour, children of their loyns, and wives of their boſome, ſo as to trample upon them, yea joyfully welcome the bloodieſt deaths their enemies could invent, and thank their perſecutors for the favour of admitting them to ſhare with the torments of their brethren, as if they had gone to divide a ſpoil, and not to be made one: This ſurely ſpeaks a heavenly

venly power to be in that Doctrine, on whose Altar, and for whose defence, they were so willing to be sacrificed: But though the profession of the Gospel did cost them so dear, yet would it but have indulged its Disciples to have aimed at their own honour, and pleased themselves with the renown that they should win by their sufferings, and that their names should be writ and read in the leaves of fame when they were dead and gone, some *Roman* spirit haply might have been found to have endured as much: Or if it had taught them, that they should have ascended in their fiery Chariot of Martyrdom, to receive heavens glory as the purchase of their patience and prowess, this might have hardned some *Popish* shaveling against the fear of those bloody deaths they met with: but the Doctrine they preached allows neither, but teaches them when they have done their best, and suffered the worst that their enemies wrath can inflict for the cause of God, then to renounce the honour of all, and write themselves unprofitable servants. All these Considerations twisted together, make a strong Cord to draw any that have stagger'd in this particular to a firm belief of the Divine Parentage of the Scriptures.

CHAP. XII.

Why the Word of God is called the sword of the Spirit; and from it the Point raised.

HAving dispatched the first part, which presented us with the Weapon it self commended to the Christians use, *i. e. The Word of God.* The second part of the *Text* now comes under our consideration, and that is the Notion under which this Weapon is commended, or the Metaphor in which it is covered, *i. e. The Sword of the Spirit.*

And here a double enquiry would be made.

First, Why the Word of God is compared to a Sword.

Secondly, Why this Sword is attributed to the Spirit, and bears his name, *The Sword of the Spirit.*

For the first let this suffice; The Sword being both of general and constant use among Souldiers, and also that Weapon with which they not only defend themselves, but do the greatest execution upon their enemies, most fitly sets forth the necessity and excellent use of the Word of God, by which the Christian both defends himself, and offends, yea cuts down before him all his enemies.

For the second, Why is this Sword attributed to the Spirit? Some take the Abstract here to be put for the Concrete, πνεῦμα for πνευματικὸς, Sword of the Spirit, for the spiritual Sword; as if it were no more but Take the spiritual Sword, which is the Word of God; according to that of the *Apostle*, 2 Cor. 10. 4. *The Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty*; that is, spiritual. Indeed, Satan being a spirit, must be fought with spiritual Arms. And such is the Word; a spiritual Sword. But this, though true, reacheth not the full sence of the place, where πνεῦμα is taken *personaliter*, for the person of the holy Spirit. And in these three respects the written Word is the Sword of the Spirit.

First, He is the Author of it: A weapon it is which his hand alone formed and fashioned; it came not out of any creatures Forge; *Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. 1. 21.

Secondly, The Spirit is the only true Intetpreter of the Word. Hence that known passage of *Bernard*, *Quo spiritu factæ sunt Scripturæ, eo spiritu legi desiderant, ipso etiam intelligendæ sunt*, The Scriptures must be read, and can be understood by that Spirit alone by whom they were made. He that made the Lock, can only help us to a Key that will fit its Wards, and open its fence; *No Scripture is of private interpretation*, 2 Pet. 1. And why not? It follows, Because it came not from any private spirit at first; *For the prophecy came not by the will of man, &c. Ver.* 21. And who knows the mind of the Spirit, so well as himself?

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It is only the Spirit of God can give the Word its efficacy and power in the soul. It is his Office as I said, *Sigillare animum charactere rerum creditarum*, except he layes his weight on the truths we read and hear, to apply them close, and as it were cut their very image in our minds and hearts, they leave no more impression, than a seal set upon a Rock or stone would do, still the mind fluctuates, and the heart is unsatisfied notwithstanding our own and others utmost endeavors to the contrary. It was not the Disciples Rowing, but Christs coming, that could lay the storm, or bring them to shore. Not all our study and enquiry, can fix the mind, or pacifie the heart in the belief of the Word, till the Spirit of God comes. *Do you now believe?* saith Christ to his Disciples, *John* 16. 31. How oft alas had the same things sounded in their ears, and knockt at their door for entertainment, but never could be received, till now that the Spirit put in his finger to lift up the Latch! *B. Davenant* on *Colos.* tells us a story out of *Gerson*, concerning a holy man whom himself knew to be sadly beaten and buffeted with frequent doubts and scruples, even so as to call into question an Article of Faith, but afterward was brought into so clear a light, and full evidence of its truth, that he doubted no more of it, than of his own being alive, and this certainty (saith *Gerson*) did not arise, *ex nova aliquâ ratione & demonstratione, sed ex humiliatione, & captivitate intellectûs, atque admirabili quadam Dei illuminatione à montibus æternis*, did not come from any new Argument he had found out to demonstrate the truth of it, but from the Spirit of God humbling and captivating his proud understanding, and admirably irradiating the same.

The words thus opened, present us with this important Doctrinal Conclusion.

That the written Word, or if you will, *The Scripture is the Sword by which the Spirit of God enables his Saints to overcome all their enemies.* The Spirit will do nothing for them without the Word, and they can do nothing to purpose without him. The Word is the Sword, and the Spirit of Christ the Arm which weilds it in and for the Saints. All the great conquests which Christ and *Doct.*

and his Saints atchieve in the world, they are got with this ſword; when Chriſt comes forth againſt his enemies, this ſword is girded on his Thigh, *Pſal.* 45. 5. *Gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, O moſt mighty*; and his victory over them aſcribed to it, *verſe* 4. *And in thy Majeſty ride proſperouſly, becauſe of truth.* That is, the word of Truth. We find *Rev.* 1.16. *Chriſt* holding *ſeven ſtarres in his right hand*, intimating the choyce care he hath over his people, particularly the Miniſters who are more ſhot at than any other; and how doth he protect them, but by this *ſharp two-edged Sword coming out of his mouth?* This is the great priviledge which the pooreſt believer in the Church hath by the Covenant of grace, ſuch a one as *Adam* had not in the firſt Covenant. He, when faln, had a flaming ſword to keep him out of *Paradiſe*, but had no ſuch ſword, when innocent, to keep him from ſinning, and ſo from being turned out of that happy place and ſtate. No, he was left to ſtand upon his own defence, and by his own vigilancy to be a Life-guard to himſelf. But now the Word of God ſtands between the Saints and all danger. This will the better appear, if we ſingle out the chief enemies with whom the Saints Warre is waged, and ſhew how they all fall before the Word, and receive their fatal blow from this one Sword, as *Abimelech* ſlew the *threeſcore ſons of Jerubbaal upon one ſtone*, Judg. 9. 5.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Wherein is shewn, How the Persecutors of Gods Truth and Church are conquered by this Sword.

THE bloody *Persecutor*, who breaths slaughter against the Saints, and pursues them with fire and fagot: Such a race of Gyants there ever was, and will be, as long as the Devil hath any kindred alive in the world, who when it lies in their power, to maintain their fathers kingdom of darkness, will not fear to trample under their feet those starres of heaven, whose light acquaints the world with their horrid impieties, and so hazards the weakning of the Devils interest in the minds of men. Hence those bloody Warres raised, cruel Fires of Martyrdom kindled, and Massacres practised upon the Saints, with many deviliſhly witty inventions of torments, that these innocent souls might linger in their pains, and stay the longer in the jaws of Death, thereby to feel themselves to die, as one of them barbarously and inhumanely said! Well, what Ladders doth God use to scale these Mountains of Pride? Where are the Weapons with which the people of God resist and overcome these Monsters of men that thus defie the Lord and his Hoasts? Wouldst thou know where? Truly, they are to be seen in the *Tower of* David, *builded for an Armory*. The word of God I mean, here hang the shields and bucklers, the swords and darts, by which the Worthies of God have in all Ages defended themselves stoutly against the rage of Persecutors, and also triumphed gloriously over their greatest force and power. Out of this brook they take those smooth stones, by which they prostrate 1.

these

these *Goliahs*. This sort of the Churches enemies are overcome two wayes: Either by their *conversion* or *destruction*. Now the Word of God is the Sword that effects both. *It hath two edges*, Heb.4.12. and so cuts on both sides.

Sect. I.

1. TO the Elect, who for a time through ignorance and prejudice, are joyn'd with the Saints enemies, as busie sticklers, and bloody Persecutors, as the worst of the Pack. The Word of God is a sacrificing knife, to rip open their hearts, and let out the hot putrified blood of their sins, which made them so mad against the Church of God, yea, and to prepare them also by converting grace, as an offering acceptable unto God, as the *Apostle* excellently sheweth, *Rom.* 15. 16. Thus the Murtherers of our *blessed Lord*, we find them by one Sermon of *Peter* so strongly wrought upon, that they presently vomit up his blood, as sick of it as ever they were for it; and at one prick that the point of this Sword gave them crying for Quarter at Gods hands, yea throwing down their persecuting Arms, and most freely entring their names into his Muster-Role, whose life but a few dayes before they had so cruelly taken away, about *three thousand* of them at one clap being *baptized in his name*, Acts 2. 41. Yea, *Paul* himself, whom I may call as *Erasmus* doth *Augustine*, before his conversion, *The great Whale*, that did so much mischief to the Church of Christ, what hook did he use to strike him with but the Word? Never had Christ a more furious enemy in the world, than this man: His heart was so inflamed with a rage against the Saints, that the fiery steam thereof came out of his lips, as from the mouth of a hot Furnace, *breathing slaughter against them wherever he went*, Acts 9. 1. Now what force of Arms, besides the Word preached, did Christ send to take in the Castle of this bloody mans heart? First, Christ himself took him immediately to task, preaching such a Thundering Sermon from his heavenly Pulpit, as dismounted this proud Rider, and sent him, bound in the Fetters of his own troubled soul, Prisoner even to that place, where he thought to have clapt up others; and then left

left his Spirit to carry on the work of his converſion, by applying and keeping the Plaiſter of the Word cloſe to his heart, which how powerfully it wrought on him, he himſelf tells us, *Rom.*7. 9. *When the Commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.* That is, when the Law came by the convictions of the Spirit to rake in his ſoul, and pierce his conſcience, then ſin revived thoſe luſts which lay like a ſleepy Lyon, now in his awakened conſcience roared ſo dreadfully, that he was as it were ſtruck dead with the terror of them, as a poor damned creature, and would undoubtedly have gone away in that ſwown of horror and deſpair, had not the joyful news of Goſpel-grace been by the ſame Word and Spirit applyed ſeaſonably, to bring him to the life of hope and comfort again. Thus was this boyſterous, furious enemy of the Saints, chained and tamed by the terrors of the Law, changed and renewed by the gentleneſs and mercy of the Goſpel; That he became no more like himſelf, than a Ravening Wolf is to an innocent Lamb, more ready to lay down his own life now for the defence of the Goſpel, than before converſion to take away their lives that profeſſed it.

Sect. II.

THe Saints perſecuting enemies are vanquiſht, when ruined and deſtroyed. Indeed if they continue impenitent, and harden themſelves againſt the Truths and Servants of God, that is the end they muſt all look to come to. They are like Ravenous beaſts, *made to be taken and deſtroyed*, 2 Pet. 2. 12. and they may know before-hand, as the certainty of their ruines, ſo what ſhall procure it; and that is the Word of God; ſee *Revel.* 11. 5. *If any will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he muſt in this manner be killed.* It is ſpoken of thoſe that ſhall dare to oppoſe and perſecute the faithful preachers of the Goſpel, fire comes out of their mouths to deſtroy them; though they have their will on the bodies of the Saints, butchering and burning them, yet the Word they preach will be their deſtruction. That lives, and ſtayes behind to pay the Saints debts, and avenge them 2.

on their enemies. God is reſolved they muſt and ſhall in this manner be killed: The Word muſt give them the fatal ſtroke. *Julian* confeſt as much, when bleeding under his deadly wound, though the Arrow came out of a *Perſian* bow, yet the Wretch knew it was ſent by a higher than a *Perſian* hand: *Vicisti Galilæe, O Galilean, thou haſt overcome* and been too hard for me; his conſcience told him, that his ſpight againſt the Truth of Chriſt, was his death; and many more beſides him have acknowledg'd as much when under the hand of juſtice. The face of the Word of God which they have oppoſed, hath appeared to them as engraven upon their judgments. O this Sword of the Word, it hath a long reach, it is at the breaſt of every enemy God and his Saints hath in the world; and though at preſent they cannot ſee whence their danger ſhould come (they are ſo great and powerful, ſo ſafe and ſecure as they think) yet the Word of God having ſet down their doom already, God will ſooner or later open one door or other to let in their deſtruction upon them. When the Prophet would expreſs the indubitable ruine of the *Philiſtims* impending, mark what prognoſtique he gives, *Zeph.* 2. 5. *Wo unto the inhabitants of the Sea-coaſt, The Word of the Lord is againſt you.* As if he had ſaid, You are a loſt undone people, the whole world cannot ſave you, for *the Word of the Lord is againſt you.* The threatning of the Word, like lightning or mildew, blaſts wherever it goes, and its curſe burns to the very root. Hence all the ſeven Nations of *Canaan* fell into the mouth of the *Iſraelites* like the ripe fruit into the mouth of him that ſhakes the Tree. The Word of the Lord curſing them, had gone before them to make their conqueſt certain and eaſie. This *Balaak* knew, and therefore would have given ſo much for a few words out of *Balaam's* mouth to have *curſed Iſrael in Gods Name.* The truth is, though we look upon the Monarchs of the world, and their Armies, as thoſe which have the ſway of the affaires of the world, yet theſe are no more than the flie on the Wheele. It is the Word of God that hath the great ſtroke in all that is done on the worlds ſtage. *I have ſet thee over the Nations, and over the Kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to build and to plant,* Jer. 1. 10. Indeed the whole earth is Gods ground: And who hath power to build on his ground, or pull down, but himſelf? And in his Word he hath given his mind

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what he will have done to his enemies, and for his Saints, and therefore as all the mercies they have, they receive and acknowledge them as gracious performances of the promise, so all the judgments executed on their enemies, as accomplishments of the threatnings of the Word, called therefore, *The judgment written*, Psa. 149.9.

CHAP. XIV.

The Word of God how victorious a Sword over the Seducer and Heretick, shewn.

THE Seducer is another enemy the Christian hath to cope with; and no less dangerous than the other: Nay, in this respect far more formidable. The Persecutor can kill only the body, but the Seducer comes to poyson the soul. Better to be slain out-right by his Sword, than to be *taken alive* (as the *Apostle* phraseth it) *in this snare of the Devil*, which these whom he sends forth abirding for souls, privily lay, even where they are oft least suspected. When *Paul* fell into the mouth of the Persecutor, he could yet glory, and rejoyce that he had escaped the latter, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness*, 2 Tim. 4. 5. See how this holy man triumphs and flourisheth his colours, as if the field were fought, and the day won; whereas good man, he was now going to lay his head on the block under the hand of bloody *Nero*'s Headsman, as you may perceive, *ver.* 6. *I am now ready to be offered up.* (Alluding to the kind of Death ('tis like) he was shortly to undergo.) But you will possibly say, What great cause then had he to cry *victoria*, when his affairs were in such a desperate and deplored condition? Yes, this made him triumph,

He had kept the faith; and that was a thousand times more joy and comfort to him, than the laying down his life was trouble. If he had left the faith by cowardize, or chopt it away for any false doctrine, he had lost his soul by losing of that; but having kept the faith, he knew that he did but part with his life to receive a better at Gods hands, than was taken from him by mans. The *Locusts* mentioned *Rev.* 9. (which Mr. *Mede* takes to be the *Saracens* (who were so great a scourge and plague to the *Roman* world newly Christianized) we find *they had tails like Scorpions, and stings in their tails*, *ver.* 10. which the *Learned Writer* forenamed interprets to be their cursed *Muhumedan* Doctrine with which they poysoned the souls of people wherever their conquering Sword came. It seems though the Sword of War in the hand of a Barbarous bloody enemy, be a heavy judgment to a people, yet the propagation of cursed errors is a greater; This is the sting in the tail of that judgment. I do not doubt but many that were godly might fall by the Sword of that enemy in such a general calamity, but only those that were not among Gods *sealed ones* felt the sting in their tail by being poysoned with their cursed imposture; and therefore they alone are said *to be hurt by them*, ver. 4. We may be cut off by an enemies sword and not be hurt, but we cannot drink in their false Doctrine, and say so. Now the Word of God is the Sword whereby the Spirit enables the Saints to defend themselves against this enemy; yea, to rout and ruine this subtile band of Satan. We read of *Apollos*, Acts 18. that *he mightily convinced the Jews*, he did as it were knock them down with the weight of his reasoning: And out of what Armory fetcht he the Sword with which he so prevailed? See *ver.* 28. *Shewing by the Scriptures* (not their *Cabala*) *that Jesus was Christ*; and therefore is said to be *mighty in the Scriptures*, *ver.* 24. A mighty man of valour, and so expert through his excellent knowledge in them, that the erroneous *Jews* could no more stand before him holding this Sword in his hand, than a *child* with a wooden Dagger can against a *Gyant* formidably arm'd with killing weapons. When *Paul* warns *Timothy* to stand upon his defence carefully against Seducers, which snapt so many every where, he can devise no better counsel how he might keep out of their hands, than by sending him to the Scriptures, and bidding him shut himself up within these, as in a Town of War,

2 *Tim.*

2 *Tim.* 3. 14. *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned*; and in the next *verse* he opens himself, and shews what lesson he means that he had learned, by telling him, that *from a child he had known the holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation*; and by consequence, wiser than all his enemies, if he stuck close to them. Other arms we may load our selves with by tumbling over many *Authors*, but he that hath this Sword, and hath been but taught of the Spirit the use of this weapon, is provided well enough to meet the stoutest Champion for error the Devil hath on his side in an encounter. With this, poor women have been able to disarm great Doctors of their studyed Arguments, rusling all their Art and Logique with one plain place of Scripture: As she who brained *Abimelech*, that great Commander, by tumbling a piece of a Millstone on his head. Out of this Armory come those weapons *Paul* tells us are so *mighty through God, casting down imaginations*, or reasonings, λογισμὸς καθαιροῦντες, by which *An Ancient* will have the *Greek Philosophers Syllogismes* to be meant. Indeed he that hath the *Word* on his side, and a holy skill to use it, hath as much advantage of his Adversary that comes with other Armour (let him be never so good a Fencer:) as a man with a good Sword, hath over him that comes forth only with a Bull-rush in his hand. All error dreads the light of the Word, and fears more to be examin'd by that, than a Thief does to be tryed before a strict Judge. *Hereticorum sententias prodidisse est superasse*, saith *Hieron*: unfold them, or bring them and the Word face to face, and like *Cain*, they hang down their head, they are put to shame. This is the only certain *Ordal* to try suspected opinions at. If they can walk upon this fiery Law unhurt, unreproved, they may safely pass for Truths, and none else. *Paul* tells us of some *that will not endure sound doctrine*, 2 Tim. 4. Alas how should they, when their minds are not sound? it is too searching for them. Gouty feet cannot go but on soft way that gently yields to them: Such must have Doctrine, that will comply with their humour, which the Word will not do, but rather judge them, and this they think it will do too soon at the great day, therefore now they shun it so much, lest it should torment them before their time. Thus the *Quakers*, they have their skulking hole to which they run from the Scripture, at whose bar they know their opini-

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ons would be cast undoubtedly, and therefore appeal to another where they may have a more favourable hearing, the light within them, or in plain English, their natural conscience, a Judge which is known too well to be corrupt, and easily bribed to speak what the lusts of men will oft have him do. Ah poor creatures, what a sad change have they made! to leave the Word that is κανὼν ἐ πίστως ἀκλινὴς, an inflexible Rule of Faith, and can no more lye or deceive them, than God himself can do, to trust the guidance of themselves to themselves, a more ignorant, sottish, unfaithful guide than which the Devil could not have chosen for them. *He that is his own teacher* (saith *Bernard*) *is sure to have a fool for his Master*: And *Solomon*, yea a greater than *Solomon*, God himself by *Solomon* saith, *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that hearkneth to counsel is wise*, Prov. 12. 15. but he most wise, that makes the Word of God the men of his counsel. The *Papist* he hath his Thicket and VVood at his back also, *Antiquity*, and traditions, to which he flies before the face of the *Scripture* for sanctuary, as *Adam* did to a Bush when God came walking to him. As if any Antiquity were so Authentick as Gods own Oracles; and any traditions of men to be laid in the balance with the Scripture. To name no more, the *Socinian* he folds up himself in his own proud reason, and takes such state on him, that the Scripture must come to that to be fenced, and not that stoop to it: He must have a Religion and Scripture that fits the model his own reason draws, or will have neither: The root of many prodigious errors and Hereticks; like those of whom *Tertullian* speaks, *Qui Platonicum & Aristotelicum Christianismum procuderunt*, who went to the *Philosophers* Forge to shape a Christianity. VVhat is this, but to carry gold to be weigh'd at the *Chandlers Scales*, and to look for the Sun by the light of the Moon. A *Modern Divine* saith, Most Heresies have sprung either *ex Samo Satani* MB. *fastu vel ex Ætij ignorantiâ, vel ex Arrij dialecticâ*, from pride, ignorance, or the Sophistry of Reason. The last of which seems to be the shelf on which *Paul* himself observes some to have split, *and concerning the faith to have erred*, 1 Tim. 6. 21. and therefore so affectionately exhorts *Timothy* to keep off this dangerous shore, and steere his course by the VVord, *vers.* 20. *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, &c.* For this

this which is here committed to him, I take for no other than *the form of ſound words* he exhorts him to hold faſt in the *Second Epiſt. chap.* 1. *ver.* 13.

Object. *But we ſee* Hereticks *quote Scripture for their moſt prodigious errors, and draw this Sword for their defence, as well as the* Orthodox: *How then is it ſuch a powerful inſtrument and engine againſt error?*

Anſw. What will not men of ſubtile heads, corrupt hearts, and bold faces, dare to do for the carrying on their wicked party, when once they have eſpouſed an error or any ſinful way? *Korah* and his ungodly company dare give out that *the Lord is among them*, and they have as much to do with the *Prieſthood*, as *Aaron* himſelf on whom the holy Oyle was poured, *Numb.* 16. 13. And *Zedekiah* that Arch-flatterer fears not to father his lye on the God of Truth himſelf, 1 *Kings* 22. 11. *He made him horns of Iron, and ſaid, Thus ſaith the Lord, With theſe thou ſhalt puſh the Syrians untill thou haſt conſumed them*; whereas God never ſpake ſuch a word. It is no marvail then to ſee any lay their Baſtard-brats at Gods door, and cry, They have Scripture on their ſide. By this impudence they may abuſe credulous ſouls into a belief of what they ſay, as a Cheater may pick the purſes of ignorant people, by ſhewing them ſomething like the Kings Broad Seal, which was indeed his own forgery; yet, God may ſuffer them to ſeduce others of more raiſed parts and underſtanding, as a juſt judgment on them for rebelling againſt the light of their own conſciences. As *Pharaoh* by the falſe Miracles of the *Magitians* was ſet off further from any complyance with *Moſes*. And thoſe of the *Anti-chriſtian faction*, 2 Theſſ. 1. 10, 11. who *becauſe they received not the Truth in the love of it, that they might be ſaved, for this cauſe God ſends them ſtrong deluſions, that they ſhould believe a lye.* But ſincere ſouls that ſearch humbly for Truth, and have no other deſigns in their enquiry after it, but that they may know the Will of God and obey it, they ſhall find upon their faithful prayers to God, a light moſt clear, ſhining from the Scripture to guide them ſafe from thoſe Pitfalls of Damning Errors, into which others fall, towards whom the dark ſide of this cloud ſtands; *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom; a good underſtanding have all they, that do his Commandments*, Pſa. 111. 10. The Fox, they ſay, when hard.

hard put to it, will fall in ſubtilly with the Dogs, and hunt with them as one of their company, but even then his ſtrong ſcent which he cannot leave behind him, bewrays him.

Thus Hereticks, for to ſhelter their errors, will crowd in among Scripture-Truths, and by their fair colours, and falſe gloſſes, make them ſeem to be of their company, but they cannot ſo perfume their rotten opinions, but their rank ſcent and ſavour will be ſmelt, and diſcerned by thoſe who have their ſences exerciſed. Never any Heretick got by appealing to the Scriptures. What *Chriſt* ſaith in another caſe, *Matth.* 26. 51. *All they that take the Sword, ſhall periſh by the Sword*; is moſt true of all *Hereticks*, they are confounded and confuted by that very Sword of the Word, which they lift up to defend them withal.

CHAP. XV.

Our third enemy, made up of an Army of corruptions and luſts within, and the power of this Sword of the Spirit to Conquer them.

3. OUR own luſts make the next Adverſary we have to grapple with. Thus the further we go, the worſe enemy we meet. Theſe are more formidable than both the former. Partly becauſe they are within us, men of our own houſe, luſts of our own boſome that riſe up againſt us; and partly becauſe they hold correſpondence with a forreign foe alſo, the Devil himſelf, who as he did beat man at firſt with his own Rib, ſo he continues to do us the worſt miſchief with our own *fleſh*. The fire of luſt is ours, but the flame commonly is his, becauſe his temptations are the Bellows that blow

blow it up. And when ſuch a fire meets with ſuch a ſtrong wind to ſpread and carry it on its wings, whither will it flie? O how hard to ſlake and quench it! A whole *Legion* of *Devils* are as ſoon caſt out of the body, as one luſt out of the ſoul; yea, ſooner. Satan likes his lodging better in the heart, than in the houſe, and is lother out. He came the more willingly out of the *Man* into the *Swine*, *Matth.* 8. 31. becauſe by coming out of his body, and contenting himſelf awhile with a meaner houſe (the Swine I mean) he hoped for a fairer way thereby to get fuller poſſeſſion of their ſouls, which indeed he obtain'd, Chriſt leaving them moſt juſtly to his Rule, that were ſo ſoon weary of his ſweet company. Now the Word is the only weapon, like *Goliahs* Sword, *None to this* for the hewing down, and cutting off this ſtubborn enemy. The Word of God can maſter our luſts when they are in their ruffe and pride: If ever Luſt rageth more than other, it is when youthful blood boyles in our veins. Youth is heady, and luſt then hot and impetuous. Our Sun is climbing higher ſtill, and we think it a great while to Night; ſo that it muſt be a ſtrong arm that brings a young man off his luſts, who hath his palate at beſt advantage to taſte ſenſual pleaſures with; the vigour of his ſtrength to take in more of the delights of the fleſh than cripled age can do, and further from fear of Deaths Gun-ſhot (as he thinks) than old men who are upon the very marches of the Grave, and carry the ſcent of the earth about them, into which they are ſure ſuddenly to be reſolved. Well, let the Word of God meet this young Gallant in all his bravery, with his feaſt of ſenſual delights before him, and but whiſper a few ſyllables in his ear, give his conſcience but a prick with the point of its Sword, and it ſhall make him flie in as great haſte from them all, as *Abſaloms* Brethren did from their feaſt, when they ſaw their brother *Amnon* murthered at the Table. When *David* would give the young man a receipt to cure him of his luſts, (not one, but all) *how he may cleanſe his whole courſe and way*, he bids him only *waſh in this Jordan*, Pſa. 119. 9. *By what means, or wherewithal ſhall a young man cleanſe his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word.* It is called *the rod of his ſtrength*, Pſa. 110. 2. God, we know, wrought thoſe great Miracles whereby he plagued the *Egyptians*, and ſaved the *Iſraelites* with the *Red* in *Moſes* his hand, by that he tamed proud

Pharaoh, making him and his people at last to let go their hold of the *Israelites*, yea in a manner to thrust them out from them, and be as glad of their room, as before they were of their company. By that he divided the Sea for *Israel*'s passage, and covered the *Egyptians* in its waves. By that he smote the Rock: And by this Rod of his Word he doth as great wonders in the souls of men as these: By this he smites their consciences, cleaves the Rocks of their hard hearts, divides the waves of their lusts, and brings poor sinners from under the power of Sin and Satan. Never could *Austin* get a Jayl-delivery from his lusts, till he heard that voice, *Tolle lege, tolle lege*; upon which, as himself tells us, *Lib. Confess.* 8. he presently took up the Bible, and that one place, *Rom.* 13. to which his eye was directed, once read, like a mighty earth-quake did so shake all the powers of his soul, that the prison-doors of his heart immediately flew open, and those chains of lusts which with all his skill and strength he could never file off, did now on a sudden fall off, and he so strangely Metamorphised, that *Quas amittere metus erat, jam dimittere gaudium fuit*; Those lusts, to lose which was once all his fear, now to pack them away, was his joy. Never man, by his own confession, was more slave to his lusts, and tyed with a stronger chain of delight to them, than himself was; he did as he saith, *Volutare in cœno tanquam cinamonis & unguentis pretiosis*; He tumbled in the puddle of his filthy lusts with as much delight, as if he had been rowling in a Bed of Spices, and anointing himself with the most precious ointments; yet this one word came with such a commanding power to him, that it tore them out of his very heart, and turned his love into a cordial hatred of them, who before would have let his heart sooner been pluckt out of his bosome, than these taken out of his heart. And as the *Word* is the weapon by which he with a strong hand brings poor sinners out of the power of Satan and sin, into a state of freedome, so he useth it to defend his Saints from all after-storms of temptations, by which Satan, now thrown out of his Kingdom, endeavors to recover the same. Those Kingdoms indeed that are got by the Sword, must be kept by the Sword. *David* will tell us how he stood upon his guard, and made good his ground against this enemy, *Psal.* 17. 4. *Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips, I have kept me from the paths of the de-*

destroyer. As if he had said, Would you know how it comes to pass, that I escape those ungodly works and practises, which men ordinarily take liberty to do? I must ascribe it to the good Word of God, 'tis this I consult with, and by it am kept from those foul wayes whereinto others, that make no use of the Word for their defence, are carried by Satan the Destroyer of Man-kind. Can we go against sin and Satan with a better weapon than Christ used to vanquish the Tempter with? And certainly Christ did it *per modum exempli*, to set us an example how we should come arm'd into the field against them; for Christ could with one beam shot from his Deity (if he had pleased to exert it) have as easily laid the bold Fiend prostrate at his foot, as afterwards he did them that came to attach him; but he chose rather to conceal the Majesty of his Divinity, and let Satan come up closer to him, that so he might confound him with the Word, and thereby give a proof of that Sword to his Saints, which he was to leave with them for their defence against the same enemy. The Devil is set out by the *Leviathan*, Isa. 27. 1. him God threatens *to punish with his strong Sword*; alluding to that great Fish, the *Whale*, which fears no fish like the *Sword fish*, by whom this great devourer of all other fish is oft killed; for receiving one prick from his Sword, he hasteth to the shore, and beats himself against it till he dies. Thus the Devil the great devourer of souls, who sports himself in the sea of this world, even as the *Leviathan* in the waters, and swallows the greatest part of Man-kind without any power to make resistance against him, is himself vanquished by the Word. When he hath to do with a Saint arm'd with this Sword, and instructed how to use this weapon, he then, and not till then, meets his match.

CHAP. XVI.

The fourth and last enemy the Christian engageth, made up of many Troops *of afflictions, together with his victory over them, obtained by this Sword of the Word.*

4. A Fourth enemy that meets the Christian, is an Army made up of many bands of afflictions both outward and inward, sometimes one, sometimes another assailing him, yea oft a whole body of them pouring their shot together upon them. This was *Paul's* case, *Without were fightings, within were fears*, 2 Cor. 7. 5. He endured a great fight of external afflictions and buffetings within his own bosome at once. And that is sad indeed, when a City is on fire within at the same time that an enemy is battering its Walls from without. Yet this is oft the condition of the best Saints, to have both the Rod on their backs, and Rebukes from God in their spirits, at once, *Psal.* 39. 11. *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a Moth.* God sometimes corrects with outward crosses, but smiles with inward manifestations, and then he whips them, as I may so say, with a *Rosemary Rod*; the one sweetens and alleviates the other. At another time he sends a cross, and incloseth a frown in it. He whips with outward affliction, and, as an angry father, every lash he gives his child, tells him, This is for that fault, and that for this, which exceedingly addes to the smart of the correction, and is the

the very knot on the Whip, to see his father so much displeased with him: And when the poor Christian lies thus under the hand of an afflicting God, or under the rebukes of a frowning God, Satan will not be long from the Christian, or wanting to throw his Salt and Vinegar into the wounds that God hath made in his flesh or spirit, thereby to encrease his dolour, and so lead him further into temptation one way or other, if he can have his will. Indeed God often sends so many Troops of various afflictions to quarter upon some one Christian, that it puts him hard to it, to bid them all welcome, and entertain them with patience; yea, it would pose any one (that knows not what service the Word of God doth the Christian, and the supplies it brings him in) to conceive, how his spirit should be kept, and his faith from being eaten up, and swallowed into despair by them. But the Word of God, this bears all the charge he is at. This is his Counsellour, and Comforter: *David* tells us plainly, his heart had dyed within him but for it, *Psa.* 119. 92. *If thy Law had not been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction.* The Word was his spiritual *Abishag* from which his soul gat all its warmth; all the worlds enjoyments heaped on him, would have left him cold at heart if this had not lain in his bosome to bring him to a kindly heat of inward peace and comfort, *verse* 50. of the same *Psalm*, *This is my comfort in my affliction*, *for thy Word hath quickned me.* Not the Crown in hope (for some think it was not when this *Psalm* was penn'd on his head) but the VVord in his heart to which he was beholden for his comfort. A word of promise is more necessary at such a time to a poor soul, than warm cloaths are to the body in cold weather. VVhen *Adam* was thrust naked out of *Paradise* into the cold blasts of a miserable world, where from his own guilty conscience within, and crosses without, he was sure to meet with trouble enough. Then God gave him a word of promise (as you may observe) to fence his soul, before he taught him to make Coats to cloath his body, *Gen.* 3. 15. compared with 21. The Lord knew full well how undispensably necessary a word of promise was to keep him from being made a prey the second time to the Devil, and from being swallowed up with the dismal sight of those miseries and sorrows in which he had thrown himself and posterity; therefore would not suffer him to lie open to the shock of their assaults one day,

but

but presently puts the Sword of a Promise into his hand, that with it he might defend and comfort his sorrowful heart in the midst of all his troubles. It was the speech of a *holy man*, after God had made that sweet place, *Matth.* 11. 28. *Come unto me ye that are weary and heavy laden, &c.* the Messenger to open his Dungeon of soul-trouble, and bring him into the light of inward joy; *That he had better be without meat, drink, light, aire, earth, life and all, than without this one comfortable Scripture.* If one single promise, like an ear of corn rubbed in the hand of Faith, and applied by the Spirit of Christ, can afford such a full satisfying meal of joy to a hunger-bitten, pining soul, O what price can we set on the whole field of the Scripture, which stands so thick with promises every way as cordial as this! Love is witty, and sets the head on work to devise names for the person we love dearly, such names as may at once express how highly we prize them, and also yet more endear them to us by carrying on them the superscription of that sweetness which we conceive to be in them. Thus many holy Persons have commended the Promises to us with their appreciating names. The Saints Legacies. The Breasts of God full of milk of grace and comfort. The Saints plank to swim upon to heaven. Indeed we might rob the world of all her Jewels, and justly hang them on the ear of the promise, apply all the excellencies she boasts of, unto the promises. There is more riches and treasure to be had in one promise, than all the gold and silver of the *Indies* is worth; *Exceeding great and precious promises*, 2 Pet. 1. 3. by them a poor believer may lay claim to Heaven and Earth at once; for *godliness hath the promise of this life and the other also.* But that which in this place I would commend their excellency from, is the admirable service they do, and succour they afford a poor soul in the day of his greatest distress. They are the *Granary* of spiritual provision, whereby our *Joseph*, our dear *Lord Jesus*, nourisheth and preserveth alive his brethren in a time of Famine. They are the *Hive of sweetness*, where the believing soul in the Winter of affliction (when nothing is to be gather'd abroad from the Creature) both lies warmly, and lives plentifully on the stock of comfort there laid up. They are, in a word, *the fair Havens*, and safe Road into which the tempted soul puts his weather-beaten ship, where it lies secure till the Heavens clear, and the storm

storm is over, which the World, sin and Satan raise upon him: Yea, when Death it self approacheth, and the Devil hath but one cast more for the Game, one skirmish more to get or lose the victory for ever, then Faith on the promise carries the Christians soul out of the Garison of his body (where he hath endured so hard a siege) with colours flying, and joy triumphing to Heaven, leaving only his flesh behind in the Hands of Death, and that also with an assured hope of having it redeem'd out of its power ere it be long, at the day of Resurrection and Restitution of all things.

CHAP. XVII.

The Church of Rome *charged of high presumption, and great cruelty, in disarming the People of this Sword of the Scriptures.*

IS the Word the Sword of the Spirit whereby the Christian vanquisheth his enemies? Then we may justly charge the Church of *Rome* of cruelty to the souls of people, in disarming them of that weapon with which they alone can defend themselves against their enemies, that seek their eternal ruine. It is true, they have some fig-leaves with which they would fain hide this their shameful practise, making the world believe, they do it in mercy to the people, lest they should cut their fingers, and wound themselves with this weapon. We see (say they) how many Errors and Heresies the world swarms with, by the mistakes of the Vulgar; yea, *Peter* himself they dare *sub pœna* as a Witness on their side: who saith *that there are some things hard to be understood* *Use* 1.

derſtood in Paul's *Epiſtles, which they that are unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as they do the other Scriptures, unto their own deſtruction*, 2 Pet. 3. 16. And therefore the Scripture which is ſo dangerous for ordinary people to meddle with, they judge it ſafeſt to lay it out of their reach, as we do a Sword or edge-tool from children, though they cry never ſo much for it. See what a fair Glove they draw over ſo foul a hand. But did *Peter*, becauſe ſome unlearned and unſtable ſouls wreſted the Scripture, forbid them, or any other how weak ſo ever, to read the Scripture? This had carried ſome weight with it indeed: But we find juſt the contrary, for in the following *verſes*, the counſel he gives Chriſtians, that they may not be led away with the errour of the wicked, is to *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, verſ. 18. *Lumen eſt vehiculum influentiæ*, Light is the Chariot that conveighs the influences of the Sun; ſo the knowledge of Chriſt brings with it the influences of his grace into the heart. And how did *Peter* mean they ſhould grow in the knowledge of Chriſt, if he would not have them read the Scriptures, which is the only book where it is to be learned? But the *Papiſts* would have their people learn the knowledge of Chriſt from their preaching of him, and not from the *Scriptures*, which they cannot ſo ſafely converſe with. But

Firſt, How ſhall they be aſſured that what they preach is true, except they have the *Scripture*, to which, as unto the true Touch-ſtone, they may bring their Doctrine to be try'd? Thus did the *Bereans* by *Paul's* Sermon, *Acts* 17. 11. A preacher as good, I trow, as any of theirs. And

Secondly, Suppoſe they preach the Truth, can they warrant that their words ſhall not be perverted and miſtaken by their Hearers? And if they cannot, why then are they ſuffered to preach in a vulgar tongue, when the Word of God (for the ſame reaſon) is forbidden to be read by the people in a known tongue? Truly, I am of that *Learned mans* mind, That if God himſelf may not ſpeak in a vulgar tongue, I ſee far leſs reaſon that a *Friar* ſhould, and ſo the people ſhould know nothing at all of Chriſt. *Mede* on *Jerem.* 10. 11. No, the true reaſon why they forbid the Scripture to be read, is not to keep them from Errours and Hereſies, but to keep them from diſcovering thoſe which they themſelves impoſe upon them. Such traſh as they

they trade in, would never go off their hand roundly, did they not keep their shop thus dark; which made one of their shavelings so bitterly complain of that *Unlucky Luther* for spoyling their Market, saying, *But for him they might have perswaded the people of* Germany *to have eat Hay.* Any thing indeed will go down a Blind mans throat. I do not wonder, that their people thus nusled in ignorance, do so readily embrace their Poperies, and believe all their forgeries so confidently. The blind man must either sit still, or go whither he pleaseth that leads him. We read of a whole Army, when once smitten with blindness, carry'd out of their way by one single man that had his eyes in his head, 2 *Kings* 6. But this we may well wonder at, that Men who know the Scriptures (as many of their Leaders do) and acknowledge their Divinity, dare be so impudent and audacious to intercept this Letter sent from the great God to the sons of men, and not suffer them (except a few whom they think fit) to look on it, though it be superscribed and directed by God himself, not to any party or sort of men, but to every man where it comes, *Rom.* 1. 7. 2 *Cor.* 1. 1. This is such a piece of impudence as cannot be parallel'd. Wherefore are Laws made, but to be promulged? Scripture writ, but to be read and known of all men? I am sure the Apostle by the same authority with which he wrote his Epistles, commands them to be read in the Church, *Colos.* 4. 16. And did the Ministers of those Churches pocket them up, and conceal them from the peoples notice, lest they should by perverting them, be made Hereticks? It is too true, some wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction: And so do some for want of care in eating, choak themselves with their bread, must all therefore starve for fear of being choaked? Some hurt themselves and friends with their weapons, must therefore the whole Army be disarm'd, and only a few chief Officers be allowed to wear a Sword by their sides? Truly, if this be Argument enough to seal up the Bible from being read, we must not only deny it to the meaner, and more unlearned sort, but also to the great Rabbies and Doctors of the Chair; for the grossest Heresies have bred in the finest wits. Prodigious errours have been as much beholden to the Sophistry of *Arrius*, as the ignorance of *Ætius*: So that the upshot of all will be this, The unlearned must not read the Scripture, because they may pervert

them through ignorance; nor the learned, because they may wrest them by their subtilty. Thus we see when proud men will be wiser than God, their foolish minds darken, till they lose the reason and understanding of men.

CHAP. XVIII.

Against the same Church of Rome, *for imputing insufficiency to the Scriptures.*

Use 2. THis falls heavy upon them that charge the Holy Scriptures with insufficiency, as not containing all things necessary to salvation. What a horrid blasphemy is this, and reproach to the great God, that he should send his people into the field, and put such a wooden Sword into their hand as is not sufficient to defend them, and cut their way through their enemies powers to Heaven, whither he orders them to march. Would any gracious Prince, that loves the lives of his Subject, give them Arms that are not fit to oppose such an enemy as comes out against them, if he knows how to furnish them with better? Nay, would he give them such weak and insufficient weapons for their defence, and then charge them to use no other? This were unworthily to send them as sheep to the Shambles, and could signifie nothing, but that he had a mind their throats should be all cut by their enemies. And doth not God himself highly commend this Sword of the Scripture to his people, when he tells *Timothy*, *It is able to make him* (as a Christian) *wise unto salvation*, 1 Tim. 4. 15. and as *a man of God* (or Minister of the Gospel) *perfect and throughly furnisht unto all good works*, vers. 17. Yea, doth he not also forbid us the use of any other weapon, than what the Scripture furnisheth us withal? *To the Law, and to the Testimony, he sends*

us;

us, Isa. 8. and makes it a renouncing our Allegiance to him, to go any where else for counsel or protection than to his written Word; *Should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?* Then follows, *To the Law, and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them*, *Vers.* 19, 20. It seems then God doth not count we seek to him, except we enquire for him at the Law and the Testimony, and bring all we hear, to their test and touch. Surely, that which is intended by God to be to his people (what the Standard and Town-Bushel are to the Market) a Rule to measure all Doctrines by, is it self exact and sufficient. But the world by this time, knows where the insufficiency of the Scriptures lie. Sufficient they are enough for *Gods* ends, but not for the *Popes* ends. They are able to furnish every true Christian in the world with wisdome enough how he should save his soul. But the *Pope* finds himself grieved, that they are not so useful to help him to save the triple Crown on his head, and do not furnish him with grounds from which he may defend the Lordly power, and God-like infallibility he claims, with other Doctrines held forth by him. And this is the only defect he can charge the *Scriptures* with, to supply which, the Rabble Rout of Traditions is brought into the Church; all taught to speak the *Popes* sence before they see the light, and that Reputation may be gain'd to these unknown Witnesses; this way their fine wits, with the Devils help (who owes the *Scripture* an old spight ever since the first promise rescued *Adam* his Prisoner out of his hand) have taken, that the *Scriptures* be declared insufficient and uncertain; *Minima particula veritatis revelatæ*, The least particle of revealed Truth, as one of them impudently writes, and so needs the patchery of these to make it perfect. Just as *Andronicus* served the *Emperour Alexius*, who gave out, He was weak and insufficient to govern alone, and so first got a joynt power with him, and at last an absolute power over him to unthrone him; and whether their Traditions have dealt better by the *Scripture*, the world may judge. When Traditions go up, the written Word is sure to go down; *Ye have made void* (saith *Christ* to the *Pharisees*) *the Commandment by your Traditions*, Mat. 15.6. ἠκυρώσατε, you have unlorded it, and supplanted its authority in the minds of men, who leave the Word to hearken to your traditions. 2.

CHAP. XIX.

Sheweth the great wickedneſs of thoſe who lift up this Sword in defence of any ſinne.

3. THis condemns thoſe of prodigious wickedneſs, that inſtead of uſing this *Sword* to defend them againſt ſin and *Satan*, lift it up audaciouſly for their defence in their wicked and abominable practices: Thus the Heretique, he takes up the Word to juſtifie his corrupt tenets, forcing it, in favour of his way, to bear witneſs againſt it ſelf. And many profane wretches we meet with, who to ward off a Reproof, will dare to ſeek protection for their ungodly courſes, from the Word, which they have at their tongues end, and interpoſe to break the blow that is made at them. Tell the *Senſualiſt* of his voluptuous, brutiſh life, and you ſhall have him ſometimes reply, *Solomon* was not ſo preciſe and ſcrupulous, who ſaith, *Eccleſ.* 8. 15. *A man hath no better thing under the Sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry.* As if *Solomon*, yea God himſelf that directed his pen, meant to fill the Drunkards quaffing Cup for him, and were a Friend of Gluttons and Wine-bibbers: Whereas, to eat and drink, and be merry in *Solomons* mouth there, amounts to no more, than *to ſerve God with gladneſs in the abundance of thoſe good things which God gives us to enjoy*; in the mouth of *Moſes*, Deut. 28. 47. Such is the deſperate wickedneſs of mans heart, that the ſweeteſt and comfortableſt portions of Scripture are moſt wreſted by many to ſerve their luſts. The Declarations of Gods free-grace made on purpoſe to melt ſinners hearts, and draw them from their luſts to Chriſt, how oft are they abuſed to

wedge

wedge and harden them in their ſins, and keep them from him! Examples of Holy mens falls Recorded, meerly to make them fear that ſtand, and to preſerve hope of mercy alive in thoſe that have faln, whereby they are in danger of being ſwallowed up with deſpair, how are they perverted by many, who lie like beaſts wallowing in their own dung, and think all is well, becauſe ſuch eminent Saints fell ſo foully, and yet came off ſo fairly at laſt, with their ſins pardoned, and ſouls ſaved! The good ſucceſs that late Repentance hath now and then had in a few, yea very few Scripture-inſtances, it is ſtrange to think what uſe and advantage Satan makes of them, to beg time of the ſinner, and make him linger ſtill in the *Sodom* of his ſinnes: The eleventh Hour, ſaith he, is not yet come; why will you repent ſo long before you need? Why ſhould he ſet out in the morning, who may diſpatch his journey well enough an hour before night? The Penitent Thief that (as one ſaith) ſtole to Heaven from the Croſs, hath, I fear, been an occaſion (though on Gods part an innocent one) to bring many a ſinner to the Gallows; yea, well, if not to a place of longer execution in another world! O take heed of this, ſinners, as you love your ſouls! Is it not enough to have your luſts, but you muſt alſo fetch your encouragement from the Word, and forge Gods hand to bear you out? The Devil indeed thus abuſeth Scripture, *Matth.* 4. 4. thinking thereby to make Chriſt more readily hearken to his curſed motion; and wilt thou tread in his ſteps? By this thou makeſt one ſin two, and the laſt the worſt. To be Drunk was a fearful ſin in *Belſhazzer*; but to quaffe in the Bowls of the Sanctuary was far worſe. No ſin is little, but the leaſt ſin amounts to blaſphemy when thou committeſt it on a Scripture pretence. The Devil cannot eaſily deſire a greater occaſion of glorying over God, than thus to wound his Name with his own Sword. When *Julian* the Apoſtate ſaw the *Gentile Philoſophers* confuted by the Humane Learning of ſome Chriſtians, he ſaid, πῖς ἀυτῶν πτερυγὶς ἀλισκόμεθα, We are taken by our own wings; looking upon it as a great diſgrace for them to be beaten and worſted at that which they counted their own weapon. The Word is the Holy Spirits Sword. O for ſhame, let not Satan make his boaſt over thy God (Chriſtian) by thy means, which he will, if he can perſwade thee to wound his Name with this his own weapon. He

that

that fetcheth an Argument from the Holy Scriptures to countenance any corrupt opinion or practice, what doth he but go about to make God fight against himself? He shoots at him with an Arrow out of his own Quiver: He sins, and then doth, as it were, say, God bids him do it. If there be a man on the face of the earth, that God will single out as a mark for his utmost wrath, this is he who shelters his wickedness under the Wing of the Holy Scriptures, and so makes God Patron of his sinne.

Use 4. *Of Exhortation.* First, To bless God for furnishing us with this Sword for our defence. Secondly, To study the Word, that we make use of this weapon to defend our selves against the many potent enemies that are in the Field against us.

CHAP. XX.

An Exhortation to thankfulness for this Sword of the Word, whereby we are enabled to stand on our defence against our greatest enemies.

1. LET us be excited and provoked to bless God for this Sword, with which he hath furnished us so graciously, whereby we may stand on our defence against all our bloody enemies. If a man had a Kingdom in his possession, but no Sword to keep the Crown on his Head, he could not expect to enjoy it long. This is a world, that there is no living or holding any thing we have in safety, without the help of Arms. Least of all, could our souls be safe, if naked and unarmed, which are

are here in the mouth of danger, and can no way pass to the place of bliss and happiness in Heaven prepared for them, but through their Enemies Quarters. When *Israel* took their march out of *Egypt* towards the promised Land, few or none would trust them to travel through their Countrey, but all rose up in Arms against them. The Christian will find his march much more troublesome and dangerous to Heaven: Satan is not grown tamer than he used to be; nor the wicked world better affected, than it was wont, to the people of God. O what a mercy is it, that we have this Sword by our side, which puts us out of danger from any of them all! This is in thy hand, Christian, as the Rod was in *Moses's*. What though an Army of Devils be behind thee, and a Sea of sins before thee Roaring upon thee, with this Sword, by faith weilding it, thou mayst cut thy way through the waves of the one, and set thy self out of the reach of the other. Truly, the Scripture is a mercy incomparably greater than the Sun in the Heavens: That might be better spared out of its Orb, than this out of the Church. If that were gone, we should be but knockt off our worldly business, and be only in danger to lose our bodily life, by missing our way, and stumbling on this Pit, and tumbling into that pond: But if deprived of the Word, salvation-work would be laid aside, or gone about to little purpose, and our souls must needs miss the right way to Happiness, and stumble inevitably upon Hell, while we think we are going to Heaven, unless a Miracle should interpose to prevent the same.

But more particularly, Bless God for these three mercies in reference to the *Scripture*.

First, For their Translation into vulgar tongues.

Secondly, For the Ministry of the Word.

Thirdly, For the efficacy the Word and its Ministry hath had upon thy heart.

SECT. I.

BLess God for the Translation of the *Scriptures*. The Word is our sword; by being translated, this sword is drawn out 1

of

of its Scabbard. What uſe alas, could a poor Chriſtian, that hath but one tongue in his head (that underſtands but one language, I mean, which his Mother taught him) make of this ſword when preſented to him as it is ſheathed in *Greek* and *Hebrew*? Truly, he might even fall aweeping with *John* at the ſight of the *Sealed book*, becauſe he could not read in it, *Rev.* 5. 4. O bleſs God that hath ſent, not *Angels*, but *Men*, furniſhed by the bleſſing of God on their undefatigable labours and ſtudies, with ability to roll away the ſtone from the mouth of this fountain! And were it not ſad to ſee the water of life brought to you with the expence of their ſpirits and ſtrength (waſted in the work) to be ſpilt on the ground, and baſely undervalued by you, ſo as hardly to be put into the Catalogue of the mercies which you praiſe God for! O God forbid! It cannot be, if ever you had but the ſweetneſs of any one promiſe in it milked out unto you, or the power of one of its divine Truths impreſſed on your hearts. *Melchior Ad.* tells us that *Bugenhagius* (whom *Luther*, uſed, with others, for his help in tranſlating the *Bible*) when the Work was brought to a happy period, he was ſo affected with the incomparable mercy therein to the Churches of Chriſt in *Germany*, That every year he invited his Friends to a Solemn Feaſt that day whereon the Work was finiſhed, which they called, *The Feaſt of the Tranſlation of the Bible.* When Queen *Elizabeth*, our *Engliſh Deborah*, open'd the Priſons at her coming to the *Crown* (as at ſuch times is uſual to ſcatter Acts of
n Grace) one as piouſly as ingeniouſly, told her, That there were yet ſome good men left in Priſon undeliver'd, and deſired they might alſo partake of her Princely favour, meaning *the four Evangeliſts, and Paul*, who had been deny'd to walk abroad in the *Engliſh* tongue, when her *Siſter* ſwayed the Scepter: To this ſhe anſwer'd, They ſhould be asked, Whether they were willing to have their liberty, which ſoon after appearing, they had their Goal-Delivery, and have ever ſince had their liberty to ſpeak to you in your own tongue at the Aſſemblies of your publick Worſhip; yea, to viſit you in your own private houſes alſo. Now, is that happy day come, and long hath been, which holy Mr. *Tyndal* told a *Popiſh Doctor* of, when a poor *Plough-man* ſhould be able to read the Scriptures, and allowed as freely to converſe with them, as any *Doctor* of them all! A Bleſſed

day

day indeed it is to the souls of men. Now, Christian, when thou art Prisoner to Gods providence, and kept by his afflicting hand at Home, thou hast the Word of God to bear thee company in thy solitude; and so, though thou canst not sit up with thy brethren and sisters at thy Fathers Table in his publique Ordinances, yet thou dost not wholly go without thy meal; thou canst not, it is like, carve so well for thy self as the Minister useth to do for thee, yet it is an incomparable mercy thou hast liberty to pick up out of the Word for thy present counsel and comfort, as thou art enabled by the Spirit of God upon thy humble prayer for his assistance. Admirable hath been the support the Saints have found from this Holy Book in their confinements. God hath graciously ordered it, that the most useful and necessary Truths for afflicted Saints hang, as I may so say, on the lower boughs of this Tree of Life, within the reach of a poor Christian, who is but of an ordinary stature in knowledge. O think, and think again of those sad times when the bloody Sword of Persecutors was drawn to keep off the people of God from coming near this Tree, and then you will the better conceive of your present priviledge: Yea, look back unto those times of *Popish* ignorance, when this Cellar of Cordial Waters was locked up in the *Original tongues*, and not one in a whole *Town* to be found that had a Key, by whom poor souls in their fainting fits and agonies of spirit, could have it open'd, so as to come by any of their sweet consolations to restore their swowning souls; and then you will surely bless God, who hath given you so free an access unto them, when others cannot have access to you to communicate their help unto you.

SECT. IV.

PLess God for the Ministry of the Word, which is the publick School he opens to his People, that in it they may learn the use of this their weapon. It is a sad fruit that grows upon the little smattering knowledge that some have got from the Word, to puff them up with a conceit of their own abilities, so as to despise the Ministry of the Word as a needless work. The *Corinthians* were 2.

sick of this disease which the *Apostle* labours to cure by a sharp Reproof, 1 *Cor.* 4. 8. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us. Paul*, it seems, was no body now with these high Proficients; the Time was, when *Paul* came to *Town*, he was a welcome man; the sucking child was not more glad to see his Mother come Home, nor could cry more earnestly to be laid to the breast, than they did to partake of his Ministry; but now, like the child when it hath suckt its belly full, they bite the very Teat they so greedily awhile before took into their mouths, as if they should never want another meal: So high did their waxen wings of Pride carry them above all thoughts of needing his Ministry any more. And hath not the pride of many in our dayes, carried them as far into a contempt of the Ministry of the Word, though their knowledge comes far short of the *Corinthians* knowledge? Well, take heed of this sin: *Miriams* plague, yea a worse, a spiritual scab and leprosie apparently cleaves to those, as close as a girdle to the loyns, who come once to scorn and despise this Ordinance, that may make all afraid to come near their Tents. What prodigious errours are they left unto, whereby God brands them? Yea, what sensual lusts hath the once forward profession of many among them, been quite swallowed up with? If once a man thinks he needs no longer go to the *Spirits School*; he shall find, who ever he is, that he takes the ready way to deprive himself of the Spirits teaching at Home: *Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings*, 1 Thes. 19. 20. They are coupled together: He that despiseth one, loseth both. If the *Scholar* be too proud to learn of the *Usher*, he is unworthy to be taught by the *Master*. But I turn to you humble souls, who yet *sit at the feet of Jesus in your right minds*, speak the truth, and lye not, Are you not well paid for your pains? Dare you say of your waiting on the *Ministry* of the *Word*, what a wretch, though a Learned one (*Politianus* by name) said of his reading the *Scripture*, That *he never spent time to less purpose*! Do you count it among your lost time, and misplaced houres that are bestowed in hearing the Word? I trow not. Thou keepest thy acquaintance with the Word at Home if thou beest a Christian, and eatest many a sweet bit in a corner while thou art secretly meditating thereon, but does this content thee, or make thee think the Word preached

ed a ſuperfluous meal? I am ſure *David* knew how to improve his ſolitary houres as well as another, yet in his baniſhment, O how he was pinched and hunger-bitten for want of the publick Ordinance! And ſure we cannot think he forgot to carry his Bible with him into the Wilderneſs, loving the Word ſo dearly as he did, *My ſoul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee in a dry and thirſty Land, where no water is*, Pſalm 63. 1. Why *David*? what is the matter thou thus complaineſt? Haſt thou not the Word to read in ſecret? Canſt thou not let down thy Bucket, and by meditation draw what thou wilt out of the Well of the Word? Why then doſt ſay thou art *in a thirſty land where no water is?* He means therefore comparatively: The ſweeteſt refreſhings he enjoy'd in his private converſe with the Word, were not comparable to what he had met in publique. And can you blame a ſick child for deſiring to ſit up with his brethren at his fathers Table, though he is not forgot in his Chamber where he is priſoner, but hath ſomething ſent him up? It was the *Sanctuary*, there *to ſee God, his power, and glory, as of old*; that *David*'s heart longed for, and could not well live without. God threatens to bring *a famine of hearing of the Word*, Amos 8. 11. Mark, not a famine of *reading* the Word, but of *hearing* the Word. If the Word be not preached, though we have the Bible to read in at Home, yet it is a famine; and ſo we ought to judge it. *The Word of the Lord was precious in thoſe dayes, there was no open viſion*, 1 Sam. 3. 1. The ſtrongeſt Chriſtians would find a want of this Ordinance in time: We ſee in a *Town* beſieged, though it be well laid in with Corn, yet when put to grind with private Hand-Mills all they ſpend, what ſtreights they are ſoon put to. And ſo will the beſt grown Saints, when they come to have no more from the Word for their ſouls to live on, than what they grind with their own private meditation and labour, then they will miſs the Miniſter, and ſee it was mercy indeed to have one whoſe Office it was to grind all the week for him. And if the ſtronger Chriſtian cannot ſpare this Office, becauſe yet not perfect; what ſhift ſhall the weaker ſort make, who need the Miniſter to divide the VVord, as much as little children their Nurſes hlep to mince their meat, and cut their bread for them? To leave them to their own improving the VVord, is to ſet a whole Loaf among a company of little Babes, and bid

them help themselves: Alas, they will sooner cut their fingers with the Knife, than fill their bellies with the Bread.

SECT. III.

3. BLess God for the efficacy of the VVord upon thy soul. Did ever its point prick thy Heart? its edge fetch blood of thy lusts, and cut off any rotten member of the body of sin? bless God for it; you would do as much to a Surgeon for lancing a sore, and severing a putrified part from thy body, though he put thee to exquisite torture in the doing of it. And I hope thou thinkest God hath done thee a greater kindness than so. *Solomon* tells us, *Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful*, Prov. 27. 6. The wounds that God thus gives, are the faithful wounds of a friend; and the kisses sin gives, come from an enemy. Gods wounds cure, sins kisses kill. The *Italians* say, that *Play, Wine, and Women, consume a man laughing.* It is true of all pleasurable sins; and as sin kills the sinner laughing, so God saves poor souls weeping and bleeding under the wounds his word gives them. Happy soul, thou that hast made such an exchange, to get out of the enchanting arms of thy lusts that would have kissed thee to death, and to fall into the hands of a faithful God, that means thee no more hurt by all the blood he draws from thee, than the saving of thy souls life! How far mightst thou have gone, and not met with such a friend, and such a favour! There is not another Sword like this in all the world, that can cure with cutting; not another arm could use this Sword to have done thus much with it, besides the Spirit of God; The Axe does nothing till the hand of the VVorkman lifts it up, neither can every one, may be none else, do with his Tools what himself can. None could do such feats with *Scanderbeg's Sword* as himself; to be sure none can pierce the conscience, wound the spirit, and hew down the lusts that there lie skulking in their fastness, but God himself: And this he doth not for every one that reads and hears it, which still greatens thy mercy. *There were many Widows in* Israel, *when God sent his Prophet to her of Zarepta.* And why to her? VVas there never

ver a Drunkard, Swearer, or Unbeliever beside thee in the Congregation at the same time, that God arm'd his word to smite thee down, and graciously prick thy heart? O cry out in admiration of this distinguishing mercy, Lord, how is it thou wilt manifest thy self to me, and not unto the world!

CHAP. XXI.

An Exhortation to the study of the Word.

LET this provoke you to the study of the Word, that you may thereby have a familiar acquaintance with it. For this the *Bereans* obtained a mark of Honour as a *Nobler* sort of *People* than others, because *they searched the Scriptures.* Acts 17. 2. Shall God leave but one book to his *Churches* care and study, and shall it not be read? Shall we be told there is so rich a treasure laid up in this Mine, and we continue so beggarly in our knowledge, rather than take a little pains by digging in it to come by it? The canker and rust of our gold and silver, which is got with harder labour than here is required, will rise up in judgement against many, and say, You could drudge and trudge for us that are now turned to rust and dust, but could walk over the Field of the Word where an incorruptible treasure lay, and would lose it rather than your sloth! O where is to be found, in what breast doth the Ancient Zeal of former Saints to the Word, lodge! Have they not counted it above Rubies and Precious Stones! Have they not trudged over Sea and Land to get the sight of it! Given the money out of their purse, the Coat off their backs, to purchase a few leaves of it, and parted with their blood out of their veins, rather than forgo the treasure which they found in it! And is the Market now fallen so low, that thou desirest not acquaintance with it when it is offer'd at a far lower rate! Either they must be charged for very fools

fools to buy the knowledge of it so dear, or you that refuse it who may have it so cheap. But lest you should think I set you upon a needless work, you are to understand there is an indispensable necessity of Scripture-knowledge. And that is double: *Necessitas præcepti*, and *necessitas medij*.

First, There is a necessity of command, *Search the Scriptures*, John 5. Indeed were there not such an expres word for this duty, yet the very penning of them, with the end for which they are writ considered, would impose the duty upon us. When a Law is enacted by a *Prince* or *State*, for their Subjects to obey, the very promulgation of it is enough to oblige the people to take notice of it. Neither will it serve a Subjects turn that breaks this Law, to say he was ignorant of any such Law being in force: The publication of it bound him to enquire after it. What other end have Law-givers in divulging their *Acts*, but that their *People* might know their duty? *Christ* fastens condemnation on the ignorance of men where means for knowledge is afforded, *This is the condemnation*, *That light is come into the world, and men loved darkness*, John 3. 19. They will not know the rule, because they have no mind to walk by it. Now if ignorance of the Word be condemned where its light shines, then sure he commands us to open our eyes, whereby we may let in the knowledge it sheds forth; For a Law must be transgress'd, before a condemning sentence be pronounced. It is the Heathen that shall be Judged without the written Word; but thou that livest within its sound, shalt be Judg'd by it, whether thou wilt know it or not, 2 *Thes.* 1. 8. And if thou shalt be judged by it, then surely thou art bound to be instructed by it: The *Jewes* once had the Word deposited in their hands, *Unto them were committed the Oracles of God*; And do you think they had well discharged their trust, by locking them up safely in the Ark, and never looking into them? Surely, you cannot but think God intended another Chest, even that in their own breasts, where he principally would have them bestowed. They were committed to them, and now to us, as a dying father doth his Will and Testament to his son whom he makes his Executor, not to throw it aside among his waste papers, but carefully and curiously to read and observe it, that thereby nothing therein contained might be left unperformed: It is called *the faith delivered to the Saints*, Jude 3.

That

That is, delivered to their ſtudy and care. If any of us had lived when Chriſt was here in the fleſh, and he (when taking his farewel of the world) ſhould have left to us ſome one thing in ſpecial charge to be done for his ſake after he was gone to Heaven, would we not Religiouſly have performed the Will of our dying Saviour, as did *Saint John*, to whom he left the care of his *Mother*, who therefore took her Home to his own Houſe? Behold here a greater charge depoſited in his Saints hands; *The Faith once delivered to them.* That is, once for all, to be by them kept and tranſmitted from one generation to another while this world laſts: So that if thou takeſt thy ſelf to be one of the Saints number, thou art concerned with the reſt, to take it Home with thee, and ſee that it dwells in thee richly, as becomes ſuch a gueſt bequeathed by ſo dear a friend.

Secondly, It is neceſſary, *neceſſitate medij*. *The Word* contains the whole counſel of God, for the bringing poor ſinners to eternal life, and none beſides this, (only as they borrow their notions out of it.) If you will not ſearch the Scripture, and ſit here at the feet of the Spirit (who fits his Scholars for Heaven by this one book) where wilt thou meet another Maſter? In whoſe works elſe wilt thou find the words of eternal life? *Apollos* (who was a man *mighty in the Scriptures*) it's ſaid, that *Aquilla* and *Priſcilla expounded to him the Way of God more perfectly*, Acts 18. 26. An Expoſition pre-ſuppoſeth a *Text*. The meaning is, they opened the *Scripture* more perfectly to him. This is *the way of God* to lead us *to God*; yea, the only way: In other journeys we may miſs the right way, and yet come at laſt to the place we intended, though not ſo ſoon; but no way will bring us to God, but this of the *Word*, neither can we walk in this way of God, if we be ignorant of it. A man may in other journeys be in his right way, and though he knows not he is right, may yet come ſafe Home: But we can have no benefit from this way of God if wholly ignorant of it, becauſe we can do nothing in faith. O labour therefore to ſtudy this Book, though thou beeſt a Dunce in all beſides! What is it thou wouldſt learn? Is it the true knowledge of God? Thou mayſt tumble over all the *Philoſophers* that ever writ, and when thou haſt done, not be able to frame a right notion of him. The beſt of them all were but brutiſh in their higheſt knowledge of God.

God. Indeed God left the wise world to run into a thousand follies and vanities, while they were by their own wisdom shaping a Religion to themselves, that having proved them Dunces, he might send them and the whole world to learn this Lesson in another School, and that is the Ministry of the Gospel, which is nought else but the Explication and Application of the Word; 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. *After that in the Wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.* Wouldst thou come to the true knowledge of sin? This also is a notion to be found no where else; the Scripture alone dissects the whole body of sin, and reads to us a perfect *Anatomy-Lecture* upon its most minute and secret parts: This discovers the ulcers of our wicked hearts which thousands die of, and through ignorance of the Scriptures can never come to know what their disease is. If lust comes not out in spots and sores, to be seen in the outward conversation, the *Philosopher* pronounceth him a clear man. The plague of the Heart, though an old disease and Epidemical, yet never was found out, or treated of, but by this Sacred Book, and this doth it fully, yea acquaints us where and from whom we got this infection: even from *Adam*, by whom the whole world was tainted and turn'd into a Pest-House. Which of the Wise ones of the World ever dreamt of this Genealogy? Poor man, till the Scripture informs him of this, lies in the pit of sin, and knows not who threw him in! In a word, Wouldst thou be helpt out? Thou must then be beholden to the Scripture to do this kind Office for thee. Thy own Cord ge is too short to reach, and too weak to draw thee thence. If thou takest not hold of this Cord of Love which God lets down unto thee in his Word, thy case is desperate. And now having set life and death before thee, I leave thee to thy choice. If yet thou beest resolved to reject the knowledge of the Almighty, and put thy soul to launch into eternity without this Chard to direct thee, not caring whether thou sinkest or swimmest, at what Port thou arrivest in the other world, Heaven or Hell; Then prepare to take up thy lodgings among the Damned, and harden thy stout heart if thou canst against those endless flames which are kindled for all those *that know not God, and obey not his Gospel*, 2 Thess. 1. And so thy terror know, that in spight of thy now wilful ignorance, thou

thou ſhalt one day underſtand the Scriptures to the encreaſe of thy torment; here thou ſhutt'ſt out their light, but then it will ſhine full on thy face, when it would give thee ſome eaſe if thou couldſt forget that ever thou didſt hear of ſuch a Book as the Bible is, but then againſt thy will, thou ſhalt carry the remembrance thereof to Hell with thee, that thy ſcornful neglect of it on earth may be continually pouring new horrour (as ſo much fire and brimſtone) into thy guilty conſcience: How muſt it needs then fill thee with amazement to think of thy folly and madneſs, to ſell thy ſoul for a little eaſe and ſloth! *Hell from beneath will be moved for thee*, to meet thee at thy coming thither: *It will ſtirre up the dead for thee*; and the poor Heathens, whom thou ſhalt find priſoners there, will come flocking about thee, and with their Taunts reproaching thee, ſaying, *Art thou alſo become weak as we?* Art thou become like unto us? Thou periſh for thy ignorance, who hadſt the Key of Knowledge at thy Girdle, and at ſo eaſie a rate might'ſt have been inſtructed in the way of life! We poor Heathens cannot bring an Action againſt God for falſe impriſonment, though we never heard of ſuch a thing as the Goſpel, for we did not walk up to our little light; and might have known more of God, had we not darkned our own fooliſh minds by rebelling againſt the light we had; but never were we at ſuch coſt to damn our ſouls as you, who have rejected the Word of God, and broke through all the threatnings and promiſes thereof, to come hither!

CHAP. XXII.

Several Carnal shifts and Objections, that some bring to excuse them from the study of the Scriptures, removed.

Object. *BUT you will say, If we had so much time to spare as others, we would not be so unacquainted with the Scriptures: But alas, we have so much business to do, and our hands so full with our worldly callings, that we hope God will excuse us, though we have not so much knowledge of his Word as others.*

SECT. I.

Answ. IS this thy Plea that thou indeed meanest to use when thou comest to the Bar, and art called to give thy answer to Christ thy Judge upon this matter? does not thy heart quake within thy breast, to think how he will knit his brow, and throw this thy Apology with disdain and wrath upon thy face? Did so much anger sit on the countenance of meek Jesus when on earth, and such a dreadful doom proceed from his sweet lips against those that made their Farms and Oxen as a mannerly excuse for not coming to his Supper, sentencing them never to taste thereof! O what then will glorious Christ say (when mounted on his Tribunal, not to invite, but to judge sinners) to such an excuse as this! Could God find heart and time to pen and send this Love-Letter to thee, and thou find none to read and peruse it! The sick man no time to look on his Physicians Bill! The condemned Malefactour to look on his Princes Letter of Grace, wherein

wherein a pardon is tendred to him! Poor wretch, muſt the world have all thy time, and ſwallow thee up quick! A curſe not leſs than that of *Corah*! Art thou ſuch a ſlave to thy pelf, as to tie thy ſoul to thy purſe-ſtrings; and take no more time for the ſaving of thy ſoul, than this cruel Maſter will afford thee! Thou and thy money periſh with thee! His ſoul is in an ill caſe which hath its allowance from ſo baſe a luſt! This is ſo far from mending the matter, that thou doſt but cover one ſin with another. Who gave thee leave thus to over-lade thy ſelf with the incumbrance of the world? Is not God the Lord of thy time? Is it not given by him, to be laid out for him? He allows thee indeed a fair portion thereof for the lower employments of this life; but did he ever intend to turn himſelf out of all? This is as if the Mariners, who are allowed by the Merchant ſome ſmall adventure for themſelves, ſhould fill the ſhip, and leave no ſtowage for his goods that pays the fraught: Will it ſuffice him to ſay, There is no room left for his Commodities? Or as if a Servant, when his Maſter asks why he neglected ſuch a buſineſs committed to his care for diſpatch, ſhould anſwer, He was drunk, and therefore could not do it. Why did you not read my Word, and meditate thereon? will Chriſt ſay at that day. Dareſt thou then be ſo impudent as to ſay, Lord, I was over-charged with the cares, and drunk with the love of the world, and therefore I could not! Well, if this be the Thief that robs thee of thy time, get out of his hands as ſoon as thou canſt, leſt it alſo rob thee of thy ſoul; The Devil can deſire no greater advantage againſt thee; he hath thee ſure enough in his Trap: He may better boaſt over thee, than *Pharaoh* could over *Iſrael*, *He is intangled, he is intangled, in the Wilderneſs of the World, and ſhall not eſcape my hands.* If a friend ſhould tell you, that you kept ſo many Servants and Retainers as would beggar you, would you not liſten to his counſel, and rather turn them out of doors, than keep them ſtill to eat you out of them? And wilt thou not be as careful of thy ſoul? Wilt thou keep ſuch a rout of worldly occaſions, as will eat up all thoughts of God and Heaven? Certainly, thou muſt either diſcharge thy ſelf of theſe, or elſe fairly diſmiſs thy hope of ſalvation. But why ſhould I ſpeak ſo much to theſe? This ordinarily, is but a cover to mens ſloth: if they had hearts, they would find time to converſe with the

Word in the greatest throng of their worldly occasions: These can find time to eat, and sleep, to sport and recreate themselves, but no time for God and his Word: Would they but allow their souls those broken ends of time to search the Scriptures, which they spend in pastimes, idle visits, reading of empty Pamphlets, it would not be long but they might give a happy account of their proficiency in their spiritual knowledge. What calling more incumbring than a *Souldiers?* And of all Souldiers the *Generals*, to whom all resort? Such a one was *Joshua*, yet a strict command given him to study the Scripture, *Joshua* 1. 8. *This book shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.* Must *Joshua*, in the midst of Drums and Trumpets, and Distractions of War, find time to meditate on the Law of God? And shall thy shop or plough, a few trivial occasions in thy private calling, discharge thee from the same duty? Dost thou think that the Closet is such an enemy to thy shop? and the time spent with God, a Thief to thy temporal estate? God, I am sure, intends his People better; as appears in the former place, *Then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

SECT. II.

Object. 2. *Answ.* BUT *I cannot read, how can I search the Scriptures?* It is sad, I confess, that Parents, who are Gods Trustees, to whom the Nurture of their children is committed, should take no more care for their souls, than the *Ostridge* doth of her Eggs, not caring what becomes of them. What do these but throw them into the Devils mouth, by sending them out into a sinful world without the knowledge of God and his Word, to become a prey to every lust that meets them! To Hell they must needs swim, if God shew no more pity to them, than their bloody Parents have done! But shall thy Parents negligence be a Plea for thy ignorance? Wilt not thou be merciful to thy self, because they were cruel? in the fear of God be perswaded to supply their defect by thy diligence. I hope thou dost not think it a shame to learn that now thou art old, which thou shouldst have been taught when thou wert young. Had not thy Parents learnt

thee

thee a Trade to get thy temporal living with, wouldſt thou therefore have lived a beggar, rather than have applyed thy ſelf (though late) to ſome Calling? There are many, for thy encouragement, who have begun late, and by Gods bleſſing on their diligence, have conquered the difficulty of the work. If thou wert in priſon, thou hadſt rather learn to read thy neck-verſe, than loſe thy life for want thereof. Now though ability to read the Word be not of abſolute neceſſity for the ſalvation of thy ſoul, yet knowledge of its ſaving truths is, and few better private means to obtain this than reading: but if thou beeſt not capable of this, thou haſt not by it an excuſe for thy ignorance ſo long as thou haſt an ear to receive inſtruction from others. As God ſometimes recompences the defect of one ſence with the quickneſs of another; ſo may be thou ſhalt find thy inability to read ſupplied with a tenacious memory, to hold what thou heareſt read or preacht unto thee; ſome *Martyrs* we find mighty in the Scriptures, able to defend the truth againſt Learned Doctors, and yet not Book-learnt: One amongſt the reſt, who could not read, *yet carried alwayes ſome part of the Scripture about him, ad when he met any Chriſtian that could, he would get him to read ſome portion or other thereof unto him*; whereby he attained to ſuch a meaſure of knowledge and faith, as made him wiſer than his enemies, and a ſtout Champion for the Truth, even to reſiſt to blood.

Sect. III.

Object 3. *Anſw.*

O *But, ſaith a third, Though I can read, yet I am of ſo weak an underſtanding, that I fear I ſhall make no work with ſuch deep myſteries as are there contained.*

Take heed this Objection comes not from thy ſluggiſh heart; which gets this fair pretence to eaſe thee of a duty thou feareſt will be troubleſome unto thee. Didſt thou ever make a trial, and ſet about the work, conſcientiouſly uſing all means that might conduce towards thy inſtructing in the mind of God? If not, lay not the blame on thy weak head, but wicked heart. When thou went'ſt firſt to be an Apprentice, what skill hadſt thou

thou in thy Trade? Didſt thou therefore deſpair, and run away? No, but by thy diligence didſt learn the myſtery of it in a few years, ſo as to maintain thy ſelf comfortably upon it, and will not thy induſtry to learn that, condemn thy ſloth in not ſtudying the Word, which is able to bring in a better livelihood to thy ſoul, than thy Trade can do for thy body?

But poor ſoul, if what thou ſay'ſt indeed ariſeth from the deep ſence thou haſt of thy own weakneſs, then ponder upon this two-fold encouragement.

1. *Firſt*, God is able to interpret his own Word unto thee. Indeed none can enter into the knowledge thereof, but he muſt be beholden unto his Spirit to unlock the Door. If thou hadſt a riper head and higher parts than thou canſt now pretend to, thou wouldſt without his help, be but like the blind *Sodomites* about *Lot*'s Houſe, groping, but not able to find the way into the true ſaving knowledge thereof. He that hath not the right Key, is as far from entering the Houſe, as he that hath none, yea in ſome ſence further off; for he that hath none, will call to him that is within, while the other, truſting to his falſe Key, ſtands pottering without to little purpoſe. The *Phariſees*, who were ſo converſant in the Scriptures, and obtained the name for the admired *Doctors* of the *Chair* called, 2 *Cor.* 2. 8. *The Princes of the World*, becauſe ſo Renowned and Adored among the people, yet even theſe miſt that truth which lay before them almoſt in every leaf of *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, whom they were, in their every-days ſtudy, tumbling over: I mean that grand truth concerning Chriſt, of whom both *Moſes* and the *Prophets* ſpeak. And at the ſame time the People whom they counted ſo baſe, yea accurſed, as thoſe that underſtood not the Law could ſee Him whom they miſt. None ſo knowing, that God cannot blind and infatuate; none ſo blind and ignorant, whoſe eyes his Spirit cannot open. He who by his incubation upon the waters at the Creation hatcht that rude maſs into the beautiful form we now ſee, and out of that dark Chaos made the glorious Heavens, and garniſht them with ſo many Orient Stars, can move upon thy dark ſoul, and enlighten it, though now it be as void of knowledge, as the Evening of the Worlds firſt day was of Light. The School-maſter ſometimes ſends Home the child, and bids his father put him to another Trade, becauſe not able, with all

all his Art to make a Scholar of him: But if the Spirit of God be the Maſter, thou ſhalt learn, though a very Dunce, *Pſalm* 119. 130. *The entrance of thy Word giveth light: It giveth underſtanding to the ſimple.* No ſooner is a ſoul entred into the Spirits School, but he becomes a proficient: Thence we are commanded to encourage thoſe that diſcourage themſelves, *Iſa.* 35. 3. *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.* Why? what good news ſhall we tell them? *The eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and the ears of the deafe ſhall be unſtopped,* Verſe 5. *An high way ſhall be there, and ſhall be called, The way of Holineſs; the unclean ſhall not paſs over it; but it ſhall be for thoſe; the way-faring men, though Fools, ſhall not erre therein.*

Secondly, The deeper ſence thou haſt of thy own weakneſs, the more fit thou art for the Spirits teaching: A proud Scholar, and an humble Maſter, will never agree; *Chriſt is humble, and lowly*, and ſo reſiſts the proud, *but giveth grace to the humble.* Though he cannot brook him that is proud, yet he can bear with thee that art weak and dull, if humble and diligent; as we ſee in the Diſciples, whom our Saviour did not diſdain to teach the ſame leſſon over and over again, till at laſt they ſay, *Lo, now ſpeakeſt thou plainly*, Joh. 16. 29. The *Eunuch* was no great Clerk when in his Chariot he was reading *Iſaiah*'s Propheſie, yet becauſe he did it with an honeſt heart, *Philip* is diſpatcht to inſtruct him. 2.

CHAP

CHAP. XXIII.

Containeth four Directions to the Christian in the use of this Sword, *for his defence against the first enemy fore-mentioned*, viz. *The Persecutor.*

Quest. BUT *haply some may say, You have said enough to let us know how necessary a weapon this* Sword *is to defend our souls, and of what admirable use in all the conflicts that the Christian hath with any of his enemies. But we hope you will not leave us thus; It is a word of Counsel we now listen to hear from you, how we poor Christians may weild and use this* Sword *for our own defence, and the vanquishing of the several enemies, whose approach you have allarum'd us to expect; some whereof we already, to our great terror, see in the field against us, and how soon the other may appear, we know not. What will a Sword by our side, a Bible in our hand, yea mouth, do us good, if we be not instructed how we may ward off their blows, and make them feel the impression of ours therewith?*

Answ. Your request is reasonable, and for your better satisfaction, I shall sort the Directions to the several kinds of enemies you have to grapple with; for their assaults being of a different nature, do require a resistance suitable to their way of fight.

SECT.

SECT. I.

WE shall begin with the Persecutor. Now wouldst thou Christian, stand the shock of his furious assault, when he hangs out his bloody flag, breathing slaughter to the Church and Flock of Christ, if they will not let him trample upon all their glory, by defiling their consciences, and renouncing the Faith at the lust of his imperious command. Then

1. Let it be thy first care to get clear Scripture-grounds for those principles and practices of thine, which stirs up the Persecutors rage against thee. A man had need be well assured of that which brings his life and dear enjoyments (that go all away with it) into hazard. It is enough to weaken the courage of a valiant man, to fight in a Mist, when he cannot well discern his foes from his friends: And to be a damp upon the Christians spirit in a suffering hour, if he be not clear in his judgment, and fixed in his principles that he is to suffer for: Look therefore to put that out of question in thy own thoughts, for which the Persecutor calls thee into question. And the rather, because it ever was, and still will be the policy of Persecutors, to disfigure what they can the beautiful face of those Truths and Practices for which the Servants of Christ suffer, that they may put a colour of justice upon their bloody cruelties, and make the world believe they suffer as evil doers. Now thou wilt never be able to bear up under the weight of this their heavy charge, except thou beest fully perswaded in thy own conscience, that thou sufferest for righteousnesse sake. But if thou standst clear in thy own thoughts concerning thy cause, thou wilt easily wipe off the dirt they throw upon thee, and sweetly entertain thy self with the comfort which thy own conscience will bring to thee through the reproaches of thy enemies. *Neme est miser sensu alieno*, saith *Salvian*, n. What others say or think of us, makes not miserable: One reproof from a mans own thoughts, wounds more than the reproaches do of all the world besides. When the *Thessalonians* were once satisfied of the certain truth of *Paul's* Doctrine, *For the Gospel* (it is said) *came to them in much assurance*, Ep. 1. cap. 1. ver. 5. then they could open their door with joy to receive it, though affli-

ction and perſecutions came along with it, *Verſe* 6.

SECT. II.

2. IMprove thoſe Scriptures which teach us to dread God more, and fear man leſs. Every man is moſt loth to fall into his hands whom he fears moſt: So that if God hath once gained the Supremacy of thy fear, thou wilt rather skip into the hotteſt fire the Perſecutor can make, than make God thy enemy: *Princes have perſecuted me without a cauſe, but my heart ſtandeth in awe of thy Word*, Pſal. 119. 161. *David* had put it ſeems mans wrath, and that which God threatens in his Word, into the Scales, and finding Gods hand to be without compare the heavier, trembles at that, and ventures the worſt that the other can do againſt him. Hence it is the Scripture is ſo much in depreſſing the power of man, that we may not be ſcared at his big looks or threats; in depreſſing the power of man, and repreſenting his utmoſt rage to be ſo contemptible and inconſiderable a thing, as none that knows who God is, needs fear the worſt he can do; *Ceaſe ye from man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of him?* Iſa. 2. 22. *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul; but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in Hell*, Mat. 10. 28. *Pueri timent Larvas, ſed non timent ignem*, Children are afraid of Bug-bears, that cannot hurt them, but can play with fire that will burn them; and no leſs childiſh is it to be frighted into a ſin at the frowns of a ſorry man, who comes forth with a Vizard of ſeeming dread and terrour, but hath no power to hurt us more than our own fear gives him, and to play with Hell-fire into which God is able to caſt us for ever. Truly, this is to be ſcared with painted fire in the picture, and not in the Furnace where it really burns. What was *John Hus* the worſe for his Fools Cap that his enemies put on his head, ſo long as under it he had a Helmet of Hope which they could not take off? Or how much the nearer Hell was the ſame Bleſſed Martyr for their committing his ſoul to the Devil? No nearer than ſome of their own wicked Crue are to Heaven, for being

Sainted

Sainted in the *Popes* Calendar. *Melanchton* said, Some are *Anathema Secundum Dici*, as *Luther*, and other faithful Servants of Christ, whom the Pope cursed. But what saith *David?* Psal. 109. 28. *Let them curse, but bless thou.* He that hath God's good word, needs not fear the Worlds bad. The Dogs barking doth not make the Moon change her colour: Nor needs the Saint change his countenance for the rage of his Persecutors.

SECT. III.

BE sure thou giveſt up thy luſts to the Sword of the Spirit, before thy life is in any danger from the Sword of the Perſecutor. He is not likely to be free of his fleſh for Chriſt, when called to ſuffer at mans hand, that is dainty of his luſts, and cannot bear the edge of the Spirits Sword, when he comes to mortifie them. Canſt thou be willing to lay down thy life for Chriſt, and yet keep an enemy in thy boſome out of the hand of Juſtice, that ſeeks to take away the life of Chriſt? Perſecutors tempt, as well as torture, *Hebr.* 11. They promiſe the honours of the *Court*, as well as threaten the hardſhip of the *Priſon*, and cruelty of the devouring fire. Now if thy love to the World be not mortified, it is eaſie to tell what choice thou wilt make, even the ſame that *Demas* did, thou wilt embrace the preſent World, and leave Chriſt in the plain field. Or if thou ſhouldſt, through a natural ſtoutneſs, bear up under ſufferings, even to give thy body to be burnt, rather than renounce the true Religion thou profeſſeſt, yet if any luſt ſhould at laſt be found to have been foſter'd by thee, thou ſhalt have no more thanks at Chriſts hands, than he who in the Law offered up an unclean Beaſt to God. It is poſſible for one to die in the Cauſe of Chriſt, and not be his Martyr. Thy heart muſt be holy thou ſuffereſt with, as well as the Cauſe holy thou ſuffereſt for. Thy behaviour muſt be gracious in ſuffering, as well as the Cauſe juſt that brings thee to ſuffer. He alone is Chriſts Martyr, that ſuffers for Chriſt, as Chriſt himſelf ſuffered: For he hath not only left us his Truth to maintain to blood, when called thereunto, but his example

to follow also in our sufferings, 1 *Pet.* 2. 21. *If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently: this is acceptable with God, for even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatned not, &c.* This is hard work indeed, in the very fire to keep the spirit cool, and clear of wrath and revenge, towards those that throw him so unmercifully into the devouring flames! But it makes him, that by grace from above can do it, a glorious Conqueror. Flesh and blood would bid a man call for fire from Heaven, rather than mercy to fall upon them that so cruelly handle them. He that can forgive his enemy, is too hard for him, and hath the better of him. Because his enemies blows do but bruise his flesh, but the wounds that Love gives, pierce the soul and conscience. *Saul* was forced to confess that *David* persecuted so furiously by him, was the better man, *Thou art more righte us than I*, 1 Sam. 24. 17. And the People went from the Execution of Christ, whom they were so mad to have Crucified, sick of what they had done, shaking their heads, as if all were not right they had done against so good a man, *Luke* 23. Now when two Contraries are in a Contest, That overcomes which preserves its own nature, and turns the other into some likeness unto it self; as we see Fire transfuseth its own heat into the Water, forcing it to assimulate and yield to it. Thus a holy, charitable spirit, by forgiving an enemy, if it doth not prevail to turn his enemies heart to him in love, yet then it turns his enemies Conscience against himself, and forceth him to condemn himself, and justifie him whom he persecutes wrongfully.

Sect. IV.

Fortifie thy Faith on those promises which have an especial respect to such a condition. *This is the Saints victory over the world, even their Faith.* Thus *David*, when *Saul* seem'd to have him under his foot, and had driven him from living in a Court, to earth himself for his safety in a Cave of the Wilderness, yet by Faith triumphed over his proud enemy, and sung

as

as pleasantly in his grott and earth-hole, as the merriest bird in the Wood, *My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise*, Psalm 56. *Saul* had his body higher fed, but not his heart fixed as *David's* was; and therefore could not sing to *David's* tune. A thousand thoughts and fears distracted his head and heart, while *David* lives without fear and care, even when his enemies are in the field ahunting for his life. Faith on the promise will, like the Widows oyl, not only set thee out of debt to all Worldly fears and cares which by thy troubles thou mayst contract, but afford thee enough to live comfortably besides, yea with joy unspeakable and glorious.

There are two sorts of sorrows that do usually distress gracious souls most in their sufferings for Christ.

First, first they are prone to be troubled for their own persons and private affairs.

Secondly, for the cause of Christ which they bear testimony unto, lest that should miscarry.

Now there is abundant provision laid up in the promises to ease the Christians heart of both these burthens.

First, Acquaint thy self with those promises that concern thy self as a sufferer for Christ, and see where any crevice is left unstopt (if thou canst) that may let in the least aire of suspicion in thy mind to disturb thy peace, and discompose thy joy. The promises are so many, and fitted so exactly to every particular Query of which the soul can desire satisfaction, that it will require thy study and diligence to gather them. God having chose rather to scatter his promises here and there promiscuously, than to sort them, and set every kind in a distinct knot by themselves, we may think, on purpose, that we might be drawn into an acquaintance with the whole Scripture, and not leave any one corner unsearch'd, but curiously observe it from one end to the other. And let not the present peace of the *Church*, cause thee to think it needless work. The *Apothecary* gathers his simples in Summer, which haply he may not use while Winter: And how soon Persecution may arise, thou knowest not: The Church ever hath had, and shall have its vicissitudes of Summer and Winter; yea, sometimes Winter strikes in before it is looked for, and then who is the man most likely to be offended? Surely, he that received the Word with joy in the prosperous estate of the

Church,

Church, but laid not in for foul weather. Well, what is thy fear? whence comes thy diſcouragement? Art thou ſcared with the noyſomneſs of the Priſon? or doth the terror of the fire, and torture of the Rack, affright thee? Know for thy comfort, if thy ſtrength be too weak to carry thee through them, thou ſhalt never be called to ſuch hot ſervice, and hard work. The Promiſe aſſures thee as much, *He will not ſuffer thee to be tempted above what thou art able*, 1 Cor. 10. 12. God who gives the Husbandman his diſcretion with what inſtrument to threſh his Corn, as it is harder or ſofter; will not let the Perſecutors Wheel come upon thee that art not able to bear it. God gives us this very account why he led his People the further way about (at their firſt coming out of *Egypt*) rather than by the Land of the *Philiſtines* (the far ſhorter cut of the two) *Exodus* 13. 17. *For God ſaid, Leſt peradventure the People repent when they ſee War, and return to Egypt.* See here, God conſiders their weakneſs, they cannot yet bear War, and therefore they ſhall not be tryed with it, till more hardned for it. But if thou beeſt called into the Field to encounter with theſe bloody fiery trials, the Promiſe takes the whole care and charge of the War off thy hands; *When they deliver you up, take no thought* (that is, diſquieting, diſtruſtful) *how or what ye ſhall ſpeak, for it ſhall be given you in that ſame hour what ye ſhall ſpeak*, Matth. 10. 17. And *verſ.* 20. *It is the Spirit of your Father that ſpeaketh in you.* There is no mouth that God cannot make eloquent: no back ſo weak, which he cannot make ſtrong. And he hath promiſed to be with thee wherever thy enemies carry thee, fire and water ſhall not part thee from his ſweet company. Theſe promiſes make ſo ſoft a pillow for the Saints heads, that they have profeſt, many of them, never to have lain at more eaſe than when moſt cruelly handled by their mercileſs enemies. One Dates his Letter *from the delectable Orchard his Priſon*; another ſubſcribes her ſelf, *Your loving Friend, as merry as one bound for Heaven.* They have been ſo far from pitying themſelves in their ſufferings, that their chief ſorrow hath been, that they could be no more thankful for them. And whence had they their ſtrength? Where drew they their joy? Had they not both from the Spirit, applying the Promiſes to them?

Secondly,

Secondly, As for the trouble thou putſt thy ſelf to concerning the Cauſe and Church of Chriſt, which thou mayſt ſee at any time diſtreſſed by the enemy, though God takes thy good-will to them (from which thoſe thy fears ariſe) very kindly, yet there is no need of tormenting thy ſelf with that which is ſure never to come to paſs. The *Ark* may ſhake, but it cannot fall. The ſhip of the Church may be toſſed, but it cannot ſink, for Chriſt is in it, and will awake time enough to prevent its Wrack: There is therefore no cauſe for us, when the ſtorm beateth hardeſt upon it, to diſturb him, as once the Diſciples did with the ſhreiks and out-cries of our unbelief, as if all were loſt. Our Faith is more in danger of ſinking at ſuch a time, than the cauſe and Church of Chriſt are. They are both by the promiſe ſet out of the reach of Men and Devils. The Goſpel is an *Everlaſting Goſpel*, Rev. 14. *Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but not one iota of this ſhall periſh*, Matth. 5. *The Word of the Lord endureth for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 23. and ſhall be alive to walk over all its enemies graves, yea to ſee the Funeral of the whole world, when at the great day of the Lord, it muſt be everlaſtingly buried in its own ruines. And for the *Church*, that is built upon a Rock impregnable, *The gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt it*, Matth. 16. It hath been oft in the Sea, but never drown'd; ſeldome out of the fire, but never conſumed; ſometimes ſwallowed up to reaſon, but, like *Jonah* in the *Whales* belly, caſt up again, as too heavy a charge for the ſtrongeſt ſtomack that ever Perſecutor had to digeſt. The Faith of this hath carried the Bleſſed Martyrs to the grave, when they ſwam to it in their own blood with joy, becauſe they knew the Church ſhould have the Day at laſt, and that they left others behind in purſuit of the victory on earth, while themſelves were taken out of the field, to triumph in Heaven: Yea, ſome by *Prophetique* ſpirit, have fore-told the very time when the perſecuted Truths, that were then buried with ſo much ignominy and ſcorn, ſhould have a happy Reſurrection and Victory over their proud Enemies. Thus *John Hus* cited his enemies to anſwer him an hundred years after, comforting himſelf, That though they then *burnt the gooſe* (alluding to his own name) *a Swan* would come in his ſtead, that ſhould fill the aire with his ſweet ſinging, which was fulfilled in *Luther*, whoſe Doctrine went far and near, and charmed the 2

the hearts of multitudes every where. And *Hiltenius* another *Germane Divine*, alleviated the miseries he endured in his stinking Prison (where he died for rubbing the *Monks* sores too hard) with this, That another, naming the very time, 1516. should arise after him that would ruine the *Monks Kingdom* (whose abuses he had but gently reproved) and that they should not be able to resist his power, nor so much as fasten a chin upon him; which came to pass in *Luther*; for, to a Miracle, he was kept out of the hands of his bloody enemies, though never mans blood more thirsted for.

CHAP. XXIV.

Directions to the Christian, how to make use of the Sword of the Word for his defence against errors and Seducers.

2. THE Second enemy that comes forth against the Christian, is the Heretick or Seducer, who is so much more to be feared than the former, by how much it is worse to part with Gods Truth, than our own life; to be corrupted in our minds, than to be tortured in our members: In a word, to have our souls damned by God, than our bodies killed by man. If the *Martyrs* had fear'd death more than Heresie, they would not have leapt into the Persecutors flames, rather than consent to their Doctrine. Now that thou mayst be able to lift up this Sword of the Spirit (the only Weapon to defend thee) with victory against this dangerous enemy; Apply thy self in the use of the best means with thy utmost care to find out the true sence and meaning of the Spirit in his Word. This Sword in anothers hand, will not defend thee: No,

No, it must be in thy own, or else thou canst not have the benefit of it, The phrase and outward expression are but the shell, the sence and meaning is the Pearl, which thou like a wise Merchant, shouldst seek for. To tumble over a Chapter, and not to reach the mind of God therein held forth, and to mumble over a prayer in an unknown tongue, are both alike. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches*, Rev. 2. 7. We are to listen what the Spirit saith in the Word as we hear or read it. And he that hath an ear for the Spirit, will not have an ear for the Seducer.

Now to help thee in thy search after the sence and meaning of the Word, These directions I hope may stand thee in some stead.

SECT. I.

TAke heed thou comest not to the Scriptures with an unholy heart. If ever you know the mind of God in his Word, the Spirit must impart it to you. And will he that is so holy, take thee by thy foul hand, thinkest thou, to lead thee into Truth? No, thy doom is set, *Dan.* 12. *The wicked shall not understand.* The *Angel* who took *Lot's* daughters into the House, smote the *Sodomites* with blindness, that they might grope for the door, but not find it. And so are those like to be served, that come with unclean hearts to the Word. *Without are dogs.* Not only without Heaven at last, but without the true knowledge of God on earth. The wicked have the Word of God, but the holy soul hath *the minde of Christ*, 1 Cor. 2. 16. Therefore the same *Apostle* exhorts us that we *be not conformed to this present world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, that acceptable, and perfect Will of God*, Rom. 12. 2. And what amounts this to, but if we will have Truth for our guest, and be acquainted with the Mind and Will of God, we must prepare a holy heart for its lodging? They commonly are taken captive by Seducers, who were before Prisoners to their lusts, 2 *Tim.* 3. 6, 7. *And lead captive silly Women laden with sins, led away with divers* 1.

lusts. When *David* would beg understanding in the Word, he makes his purpose for a holy life, the Argument with which he urgeth God, *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy Statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy Law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart,* Psal. 119. 33, 34.

Sect. II.

2. MAke not thy own reason the Rule by which thou measurest Scripture-Truths. Is that fit to try the Revelations of the Word by, which is dunced and pozed with so many secrets in Nature? Doth not the Word reveal such things to us, as are not only above sence, *for eye hath not seen them, nor ear heard them*; but also above the Ken of Reason? being such as *never entred into the heart of man,* 1 Cor. 2. 9. Indeed the whole *Systeme* of *Gospel-Truths* speaks in a Forreign and Out-landish tongue to Reason: It can make no sence of them, except Faith be the Interpreter. The Scriptures are like the *Red Sea*, through which the *Israelites* by faith passed safely, but the *Egyptians* attempting to do it, for want of that Guide, were drowned. A humble believer passeth through the deep mysteries of the Word safely, without plunging into any dangerous mistakes; whereas those sons of Pride, who leave Faith, and take Reason for their Guide, we see how they are drowned in many damnable errors, *Arrianism, Pelagianism, Socinianism*, and what not? The most dangerous errors fathered upon the *Scriptures*, have sprung from this womb. This was the *Saducees* ground on which they went, for their denying the Resurrection of the Dead. They own'd the book of *Moses* for the Word of God, and yet denied the Resurrection asserted therein, because it seem'd so impossible a thing to their Reason, that our bodies, after so many alterations into slime and dust, should stand up in life: This their Reason laughed at; for so our *Saviours* answer plainly shews, *Mat.* 22. 29. *Ye erre, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.*

SECT.

Sect. III.

WHen thou consulteſt with the Word, take heed thou comeſt not with a judgment pre-ingaged to any party and opinion. He is not like to hold the Scales even, whoſe judgment is bribed before-hand. A diſtemper'd eye ſees the object of that colour with which it ſelf is affected: And a mind pre-poſſeſt, will be ready to impoſe its own ſence upon the Word, and ſo loſeth the Truth by an over-weening conceit of his own opinion. Too many, alas, read the Scriptures not ſo much to be informed by them, as confirmed in what already they have taken up! They chooſe opinions, as *Sampſon* his Wife, becauſe they pleaſe them, and then come to gain the Scriptures conſent. Thus the *Jews* firſt made up the match with their *Idols*, and then ask counſel of God what they ſhould do, *Ezekiel* 14.4. It is a juſt judgment of God, that ſuch ſhould not ſee Truth when it lies fair before them, but be given up to an injudicious heart, to believe the Word favours their fancies, and chimes as they think; *Ver.* 4, 5. *I the Lord will anſwer him according to the multitude of his Idols: That I may take the houſe of* Iſrael *in their own heart.* And when is a man taken in his own heart, if not when inſnared in the fancies and follies which his erroneous mind hath weaved? 3.

Sect. IV.

GO to God by prayer for a Key to unlock the myſteries of his Word. It is not the plodding, but the praying ſoul that will get this Treaſure of Scripture-knowledge. Saint *John* got the *Sealed book opened by weeping*, Rev. 5. 5. God oft brings a Truth to the Chriſtians hand as a return of prayer, which he had long hunted for in vain with much labour and ſtudy; *There is a God in heaven that revealeth ſecrets*, Dan. 2. 22. And where doth he reveal the ſecrets of his Word, but at the Throne of grace? From the *firſt day* (ſaith the *Angel*) *that thou didſt ſet thine heart to underſtand, and to chaſten thy ſelf before thy* 4.

God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words; i. e. for thy prayer, *Dan.* 10. 12. And what was this heavenly Messengers Errand to *Daniel*; but to open more fully the Scripture to him? as appears by *vers.* 14. compared with *vers.* 21. This holy man had got some knowledge by his study in the Word, and this sets him a praying, and prayer fetcht an *Angel* from heaven to give him more light. If ever we know the mind of God, we must be beholden to the Spirit of God for it; *When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will lead you into all truth*, John 16. And the Spirit is the fruit of Christs intercession, *I will pray the Father, and he will send the Comforter*, &c. Now there must be a concurrence of our prayers with his Intercession. While our *High Priest* is offering incense within the Vail, we are to be praying without for the same that he is interceding within.

Now to quicken thee up to pray with more fervent importunity for this manuduction of the Holy Spirit to lead thee into Truth:

1. *First*, Let the dread of those Scriptures, which set forth the danger of errors and false Doctrines, fall upon thee, that thou mayst not think thou goest upon a slighty errand, when praying to be preserved from them, as if the odds were not great, whether thou hast thy request, or hast it not. It is one of the Devils Master-policies, by sinking the price of Errors in the thoughts of men to make them thereby the more vendible. Many think, they shall not pay so dear for an Error in judgment, as for a sin in practice: Yea, some have such a latitude, that they fancy a man may be saved in any Religion. A principle that must needs tend to make them that hold it, careless and incurious in their choice. That sin shall not want Customers, which men think they shall pay little or nothing for. Some can be content to be drunk on free-cost; that would not, were they assured their own purse should pay soundly for the Reckoning. How comes Fornication to abound so much among the *Romish Clergy*, but because it is counted so petty a sin by them? And I wish that Error and Heresie (which are the Fornication of the mind) were not by many among our selves sized as low. But wo be to those *Clerks* of the *Devils Market*, that tempt and toll men on to sin by setting cheaper Rates on their Head, than the Word of God hath done. If once the dread of a sin be worn off the conscience,

ence, no wonder then if we see men as boldly leap upon it, as the Frogs in the Fable on the Log, that lay so still and tame at the bottom of the River. Fear makes the body more apt to take infection, but it preserveth the soul from the infection of sin.

Now that thou mayst the more stand in fear of drinking in the poyson of any corrupt and unsound Doctrine, let thy mind ponder on a few Scriptures, which shew both their detestable, and also damning nature of them: *Gal.* 5. 19. there *Heresie* is called *a work of the flesh*, and reckoned among those sinnes, which shut the doers of them out of Heaven; *They which do such things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of GOD*, Vers. 21. They are called *Doctrines of Devils*, 1 Tim. 3. 1. And if they come from the Devil, whither must they lead but to Hell? Such as are against the fundamental principles of the Gospel, are inconsistent with the love and favour of God: 2^d *Epist. of John, He that abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ, hath not God.* And who, think you, shall have him that hath not God? Were there no other Scripture to be produced against this kind of sin, but that one, 2 *Pet.* 2. 2. it were enough to strike the *Heretick* through his loyns, and make the knees of every *Seducer* like *Belshazzars* at the sight of the *hand-writing on the Wall*, to knock one against the other; *There shall be false Teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.* So that if a man hath a mind to get the start of other sinners, and desires to be in Hell before them, he need do no more, but open his sails to the wind of Heretical doctrine, and he is like to make a short Voyage to Hell of it: for these bring upon their Maintainers *Swift Destruction.* Nay, the *Spirit of God*, the more to aggravate their deplored state, brings in three most dreadful instances of divine vengeance that ever was executed upon any sinners, *viz.* The detrusion of the *Apostate Angels* from Heaven to Hell, The Drowning of the *Old World*, And the Conflagration of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* by running Hell (as it were) out of Heaven upon them: I say, he brings these as patterns and pledges of that vengeance which shall certainly befall this kind of sinners. And by this time I hope thou wilt be warm in thy prayer against this dangerous enemy. But

Secondly,

Secondly, When thou haſt thus poſſeſt thy heart with the dread of being led into any corrupt opinion, then ſtrengthen thy faith from thoſe comfortable *Scriptures* which aſſure thee, that no ſincere Saint ſhall be left to fall finally into any ſoul-damning error. Chriſt is as able for, and faithful in his *Prophetique* and *Kingly* Offices, as his *Prieſtly*. Surely he will not have the leaſt care of his Peoples Underſtanding, which is Guide to their whole man, and is that faculty which he firſt practiſeth upon in the work of converſion. Thou haſt therefore as ſtrong ground to believe he will preſerve thee from damnable principles, as damnable practiſes. It would be little advantage to be kept from one enemy, and left open to the will and power of another. Chriſts Hedge comes round about his People. *Solomon* tells us, *The mouth of a ſtrange Woman is a deep Pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord, ſhall fall therein*, Prov. 14. 22. And ſo is the mouth of the Seducer who comes with ſtrange Doctrines, whoriſh opinions. Now who is this Pit digged for? Indeed if we look at Satans deſign, it is a Trap chiefly laid to catch the Saint; he would, *if poſſible, deceive the very Elect*. His greateſt ambition is to ſpread his Bannars in this Temple of God, and defile them whom God hath waſhed. But if we eye Gods intention, it is a Pit he ſuffers to be made for Hypocrites and falſe Goſpellers, ſuch who never would heartily cloſe with Chriſt and his Truth; theſe are they whom God abhors, and therefore left by him to become a prey to theſe that go abirding for ſouls with their corrupt Doctrines; 2 *Theſ.* 2. 10, 11. *Becauſe they received not the love of the Truth that they might be ſaved, for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions, that they ſhould believe a lye; that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* Theſe like the out-ſetting *Deer* are ſhot, while they within the *Pale* are ſafe: Or like the *Suburbs* taken by the enemy, but thoſe within the *City* eſcape their fury. *It is the outward Court* Rev. 11.2. *that is left to be trampled under foot.* And in the fore-quoted place of the *Epiſtle* to the *Theſſalonians*, though he gives up Hypocrites to be deceived by falſe teachers, as once *Ahab* by thoſe *Knights* of the *Poſt* his *falſe Prophets*, yet *verſ.* 13. he ſpeaks cómfortably to the *Elect*, and ſhews, that the ſame Decree which appointed them to ſalvation, provided alſo for their em-

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bracing the Truth, as the neceſſary means leading thereunto; *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, becauſe God from the beginning, hath choſen you to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the Truth.* And if God hath got poſſeſſion of the Head by his Truth, and of the Heart by his ſanctifying grace, he will keep them out of Satan's Clutches. Go therefore, and plead the promiſe for thy preſervation: The promiſe improved by faith at the Throne of Grace, will be thy beſt Antidote in theſe times of general infection. Never fear ſpeeding when the promiſe bids thee go and proſper. The mercy is granted before thou askeſt it; only God will have thee by prayer lay thy claim to it, before thou beeſt poſſeſſed of it. And for thy help I have ſet down ſome ſweet promiſes of this Nature, with which, if thou acquainteſt thy ſelf, thou mayſt be furniſh'd both with grounds for thy Faith, and Arguments for thy Prayer in this caſe, *Mat.* 24.24. *John* 7.12. *John* 10.5.29. 1 *Cor.* 11.19. *Phil.* 3.15. 1 *John* 2.19, 20.

SECT. V.

COmpare Scripture with Scripture. Falſe Doctrines, like falſe Witneſſes, agree not among themſelves. Their name may be called *Legion, for they are many.* But Truth is one; It is Homogenial: One *Scripture* ſweetly Harmonizeth with another. Hence it is, though there were many *Penmen* of Sacred Writ, and thoſe of ſeveral Ages one after another, yet they all are ſaid to have but one mouth, *Luke* 1.70. *As he ſpake by the mouth of his holy Prophets, which have been ſince the world began.* All had one mouth, becauſe they accord ſo perfectly together. The beſt way therefore to know the mind of God in one Text, is to lay it to another. The *Lapidary* uſeth one Diamond to cut another, ſo ſhould we one place of Scripture to interpret another. *Scriptures* compared, like Glaſſes ſet one againſt another, caſt a light each to other; *Nehem.* 8.8. *They (i.e.* the *Levites) read in the book in the Law of God diſtinctly, and gave the ſence, and cauſed them to underſtand the reading.* 5.

ding. Et exponendo ſenſum dabant intelligentiam per Scripturam ipſam. So *Tremelius* reads the words, They gave them the meaning of what they read by the Scripture it ſelf. Now in comparing *Scripture* with *Scripture*, be careful thou interpreteſt obſcure places by the more plain and clear, and not the clear by the dark. Error creeps into the moſt ſhady obſcure places, and there takes Sanctuary. *Some things hard to be underſtood, which they that are unlearned wreſt.* No wonder they ſhould ſtumble in thoſe dark and difficult places, when they turn their back of that light which plainer Scriptures afford to lead them ſafely through; *He that is born of God, ſinneth not, but keepeth himſelf, and that the wicked one toucheth him not*, 1 John 5. 18. This is a dark place, which ſome run away with, and from it conclude there is a perfect ſtate free from all ſin attainable in this life: whereas a multitude of plain Scriptures teſtifie againſt ſuch a concluſion, 1 *King.* 8. 38. *Prov.* 20. 9. *Eccleſ.* 7. 20. *Job* 9. 20. *Phil.* 3. 12. 1 *John* 1. 8, 9, 10. with many more. So that it muſt be in a limited and qualified ſence, That *he that is born of God ſins not*; he ſins not *finally*, or *comparatively*, not as the carnal wretch doth: *And the wicked one toucheth him not*; i.e. *Non tactu qualitativo*, as *Cajetan* ſaith. Not ſo as to transfuſe his own nature and diſpoſition into him, as the fire toucheth the Iron or Wood it comes near, aſſimulating them to its own nature. This Rule of uſing plain Scriptures to be a Key for to unlock obſcure, will hold in all other inſtances. And bleſſed be God, though to tame our pride he hath inſerted ſome knotty paſſages, yet the neceſſary ſaving Truths are of eaſie acceſs even to the weakeſt underſtanding. *Salubriter Spiritus Sanctus ita, Scripturas Sanctas modificavit, ut locis apertioribus fami occurreret, obſcurioribus faſtidia detergeret.* Aug. de Doc. Ch. lib. 2. c. 6. There is enough in the plain places of Scripture to keep the weak from ſtarving, and in the obſcure to lift them above contempt of the ſtrongeſt.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

CONsult with thy faithful Guides which God hath set over thee in his Church. Though People are not to pin their faith on the Ministers sleeve, yet they are *to seek the Law at his mouth, for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts*, Mal. 2. 7. Christ directs his Kids for their safety, that they turn not aside into by-paths of error, and fall not into the hands of false Teachers (those cheating companions) that *they go forth by the foot-steps of the flock, and feed beside the Shepherds Tents*, Cant. 1. 8. The Devil knows too well; Send away the Shepherd, and he may soon catch the sheep. And these Times prove sadly, that he is not mistaken. When were Peoples affections more withdrawn from their Ministers? And when were their judgments more poysoned with error? Of what sort, I pray, are those, that have been Trapand into dangerons errors in our late unhappy times? Have they not most this brand upon them? Are they not such who would sooner hearken to a stranger (may be a *Jesuite* in a Buff-Coat, or with a Blew Apron before him?) Seek to any *Mountebank* that comes they know not whence, is here to day, and gone to morrow, than to their own Ministers, who from God have the Rule over them, and Watch for their souls, as they that must give account to God for them? yea, who from many years experience in life and Doctrine they have found able and faithful? In the fear of God consider this: They are not your Ministers (I speak as to the most) in their Pulpits and publick Ministry, but these Hucksters and Quack-Salvers in corners practising upon you, that have privily brought in damnable Doctrines, and leavened so great a lump of people in the Nation with sour and unsound Doctrine. If thou wouldst therefore be preserved from error, make use, as of the Sword of the Word in thy own hand, so of the holy skill that God hath given thy Faithful Minister for thy defence. Wait on his publick Ministry, praying for divine assistance to be poured down on him, and a divine blessing from his labours to fall on thy self. If at any time thou art in the dark concerning his Message, resort to him, and I dare promise thee (if he answers 6.

his name, and be a faithful Minister of the Gospel) an easie access, and hearty welcome to him, only come to learn, not cavil; to have thy conscience satisfied, not any itch of vain curiosity Rub'd. Our Saviour, who was so willing to satisfie his Disciples concerning the Doctrine he publickly preacht, that in private he open'd it to them more fully, yet when they came with nice and curious questions, did rather chuse to repell that humor by a Reproof, than cherish it by a satisfying answer. *It is not for you to know the times and the seasons:* And at another time, *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee, follow thou me.* He takes *Peter* off from an unprofitable Question, to mind a necessary duty.

CHAP. XXV.

Directions how to use this Sword for the cutting down, and conquering the lusts in our own bosomes, and temptations to sin from without.

THE third enemy we are to fight, is made up of an Army of Lusts lodg'd within our own bosoms, which have Satan to head and lead them forth against us. And who that believes he hath a soul to lose or save, can be unwilling to engage against this cursed Combination of lusts and Devils! The *Romans* were said, when in War with other *Nations*, to fight for honour and glory, but against the *Carthaginians*, for their very life and being. In this War against sin and Satan, both lie at stake. This, this is the most Noble War of all other. *Noble, First*, because *Just*. It is too true, I fear, what one saith of the Wars, which the great *Monarchs* of this World wage

wage one against another, That the cause is very seldom so clear for which they take Arms, but there is some ground of scruple left in the conscience of the undertaker. But here we are put out of all doubt. This, without abusing the name, may be called *The Holy Warre*; for it is against the only enemy that the Holy God hath in the World, who hath himself taken the field, and set up his *Royal Standard* in defiance of it; to which he calls all mankind, some by the voyce of a natural conscience, and others by the loud sound of his Word to repair, and upon our Allegiance to him our Soveraign Lord and Creatour to help him against the Mighty; not because he needs our help, but expects our duty, and had rather reward our Loyalty, than punish our Rebellion. Some have been found, who for shame have killed themselves, that their Prince; through their cowardize, had lost the Victory. O what confusion then will one day fill our faces, if we by our faintness or treachery, do, what lies in us, help Satan and sin to triumph over God himself! But *again*, *It is a noble Warre*, because hard and difficult. This is an enemy stout and stubborn, such as will try both our skill and strength to the uttermost. Never did Coward overcome in this War. What sin loseth is but by inches, and what it gains hardly lets go. They who follow this War closest, will find a lifes work at least of it. O you that love brave Exploits, and hunt for enterprizes that only a few generous spirits dare undertake; Here is that you look for: fighting with men, and storming of Castles, is but childrens play to this encounter, where Devils and lusts are to be repelled. *He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City*, Prov. 16. 32. Better, because he overcomes a worse enemy, infinitely more potent and puissant. Few also of the Worlds Swordmen, so famed for their conquests, but have lived and died slaves to sin, Cowardly submitting the neck of their souls to draw the Iron Chariot of a base lust, while they have proudly sate to be drawn in Triumph by those whom they have taken prisoners in War. Thus as *Hanibal* was beaten at Home in his own Countrey, who was a Victor in his forreign expeditions; so too many that do great feats at Arms abroad, which makes them famous in this world, are miserably beaten, and shamefully trampled upon by their own corruptions at home,

that will make them much more infamous in the other world. But be not you (O ye Saints) dismayed at the report of your enemies strength and number; The greater will be your victory, and the more your Captives to draw your Triumph and Chariot; neither let your hearts faint to see the conquering *Cæsars* despoiled of their Ensigns of Honour by this enemy, which themselves had won from others, and to die in chains slaves to their lusts, that had lived Conquerors over men. Remember for your comfort, it is but the unbelieving world, such as are without spiritual Arms, and so abandoned of God, that are left thus to become a prey to sin and Satan: But you have a God on your side, who gives you the *consecrated Sword* of his *Word* for your defence, a weapon whose edge Satan hath already felt, and therefore trembles when ever Faith draws it forth. He that made this *Leviathan* (as is said of the other, *Job* 40. 19.) can make this his Sword to approach to him, and the heart of all thy lusts also. But I forbear; my task in this place being not to excite you to, but direct you in the management of your fight with this your enemy, and that also only by teaching you the use of this one weapon the Word of God in order to repelling motions to sin from within, or temptations to it from Satan without. First therefore.

Sect. I.

1. TAke some pains to collect out of the Word, the several lineaments with which the Spirit of God doth paint out the deformity of sin, that so thou mayst make it the more odious and hateful to thy thoughts, when by laying them together, thou shalt see in its true picture and portraiture (drawn by so skilful and faithful a hand) the fair face of this goodly *Lady*, whose beauty Satan doth so highly commend to thy wanton embraces. Poor man sins upon Satans credit, and receives it into his bosome, as *Jacob* did his Wife into his bed, before he sees its face, or knows well what it is; and therefore as he in the morning found her to be not that beautiful *Rachel* as was promised, but a blear-eyed *Leah*; so the sinner too late, when his conscience

ence awakes, sees himself miserably cheated and disappointed of what he lookt for, and finds a purgatory where he expected a Paradise.

Now that thou mayst (Christian) the better see the ugly shape of this horrid Monster, Sin, observe from the Word of God these four particulars concerning it.

First, The birth and extraction of it.

Secondly, The names given it.

Thirdly, Its Nature: And

Fourthly, Its properties.

1. The birth and pedegree of sin, who is its father, and from whom is it descended? The Holy God disowns it. The Sun can as soon beget darkness, as God, who is the Father of lights, be the Author of sin: *From him comes every good and perfect gift.* But O Sin; whence art thou? Thou art not his Creature, he neither made thee, nor ever moved any to thy production. Certainly, if it were from him, he would like and love it: Every one loves his own child though never so black, much more doth God like what is his. We find him, looking back upon every dayes work of the Creation, and upon all at last, pleased with what he had done, *All was very good*, Gen. 1. But of sin what he thinks, see *Deut.* 7.22. *Prov.* 6.16. *Rev.* 2.6, 15. where he expresseth his detestation and hatred of it, from which hatred proceed all those direful plagues and judgments thundered from the fiery mouth of his most holy Law against it; nay, not only the work, but worker also of iniquity becomes the object of his hatred, *Psalm* 5.5. So that if God were the Author of sin, he should be a hater of himself. Well, at whose door then doth God lay this Brat to find a father? Surely, at the Devils, *John* 8.44. *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.* And again in the same place, *When he speaketh a lye, he speaketh of his own, for he is a lyar, and the father of it.* Sin is a Brat which calls the Devil both father and mother; for of himself, even of his own free-will (the womb wherein it was conceived) did he beget it; and having begot it, put it out to Nurse to Man. And is not Man, who was made to serve and enjoy the great God his Maker, highly set up, to Suckle and carry this his infernal Masters child about in his arms? Ah poor man, whence art thou faln! It is strange, Jam. 1.13.

that

that the very remembring whose off-spring thy self wert, doth not strike thee into a horror, to see thy precious soul debased unto such servitude as to fulfill the lusts of that cursed spirit. Never let us spit at the Witch for suffering the Devils imps to suck on her body, while we can prostitute our souls to any of his lusts.

Sect. II.

2. THe Names and Titles with which the Word stigmatizeth sin. And God to be sure, mis-calls none: If a thing be sweet, he will not say it is bitter; if good, he will not call it evil: For he claps a woe upon his head that doth so, *Isa.* 5. 20. Never think to find Honey in the Pot, when God writes Poyson on its Cover. We may say of every sin in this respect, what *Abigal* of her Husband; as is its name in Scripture, so is it: If God call it folly, then there is no wisdom to be found in it. The Devil indeed teacheth sinners to cover foul practises with fair names, Superstition must be stiled Devotion; Covetous Thrift; Pride in Apparel, Handsomness; Looseness, Liberty; and Madness, Mirth. And truly there is great need for sinners to do thus, to make this fulsome dish go down with less regret. There are some have made a hearty meal of Horse-flesh, or the like Carrion under a better name, whose stomacks would have risen against it, if they had known what it was. Therefore as Persecutors of Old wrapt the Christians in the skins of those Beasts, which would render them the most desirable prey to those they were cast; so Satan and our false hearts present sins to us under those names that will sharpen our appetites to them, or at least take away the abhorrency our consciences else would shew against them: But canst thou be content, poor soul, to be so easily cheated? Will the fire burn thee the less, into which thou art emboldened to put thy finger, because a Knave that owes thee an ill turn, tells thee that it will not hurt thee? Hear rather what the God of Truth saith of sin, and by what names he calls it, and you shall find, That whatever is dreaded by us, or hated, feared or loathed in all the World, They are borrowed, and ap-

applyed to sin: The vomit of Dogs, the venom of Serpents, the stench of Rotten Sepulchres, Dunghills and Jakes, the deadliest diseases and sores, Gangrenes, Leprosies, and Plague attributed to it; yea, Hell is Raked for an expression to set it out, it being compared to the very fire of Hell it self, *James* 2. 6. And because of the penury and straightness of these appellations, (not able to express its full horridness) therefore it is called by its own name, as the worst that God himself can say thereof, *Sinful sin*, Rom. 7. 13. Now what shall be done to the thing that the great God thus loaths, and loads with such names of dishonour, thereby to signifie his abhorrence of it? What? every gracious heart will soon resolve, that he should pursue it with fire and sword, till we have executed upon it the judgment written in its utter ruine and destruction.

2 Pet. 2. 20. Luke 3. 7. Rom. 3. 13. 2 Tim. 2. 7. 1 Kings 8. 38.

Sect. III.

THe nature of sin as the Word defines it. See its description, 1 *John* 3. 4. *Sin is the transgression of the Law*: A few words, but of weight enough to press the soul that commits it to Hell, yea to press sin it self to death in the heart of a Saint, if laid on with these considerations. 3.

First, Whose Law it is by sinning we break; not of some petty Prince (and yet such conceive their Honour so deeply concern'd in their Laws, that they take vengeance on the Violaters of them) but of the great God whose glorious Name is in every Attribute Assaulted and Reproacht by the sinner, yea the very life and being of God endeavoured to be destroyed; *Peccatum est Deicidium.* For he that would Rob God of his honour, is an enemy to his very being, because Gods being is so wrapt up in his glory, that he cannot out-live the loss of it. These, it is true, are above the reach of the sinners short Arm, but that is no thanks to him, because his sin aims at these, though it cannot carry its shot so far as to hurt him.

Secondly, What Law it is; not cruel, writ with the blood of his Creatures, as the Laws of some Tyrant Princes are, who consult with their own lust, and not their Peoples good in their Edicts.

Edicts. But this Law is equal and good; in keeping of which is life. So that no provocation is given by any rigour of unneceſſary Taxes impoſed upon us to riſe up againſt it. *What iniquity* (ſaith God) *have your fathers found in me, that they are gone farre from me?* Jer. 2. 5. He that put away his Wife, was to give her a Bill of Divorce, Declaring the cauſe of his leaving her. Thus God condeſcends to expoſtulate with ſinners, and asks what evil they can charge upon him or his Government that they forſake him. But alas, no more cauſe can be given, than why a Beaſt in a fat, ſweet Paſture, ſhould break the Hedge to get into a Barren Heath, or a Dirty Lane, where nothing but ſtarving is to be had.

Thirdly, At whoſe motion the poor creature tranſgreſſeth the good Law of God, and that is of a curſed ſpirit the Devil, no leſs our enemy than Gods enemy. Now for a child at the ſolicitation of his fathers greateſt enemy, and his own alſo, to take up Rebellious Arms againſt a dear loving Parent, adds to the monſtroſity and unnaturalneſs of the fact. This thou doſt, Chriſtian, when by ſin thou tranſgreſſeſt the Law of God: And now by this time methinks I ſee thy blood to riſe and boyle with anger in thee, while thy God points to thy ſin and tells thee, This, O my child, is the enemy that would take away my glory and life too by thy means, who by a debt both of Nature and Grace, oweſt thy whole ſelf to live and dye for the maintaining of my honour! Art thou not as ready to fall upon thy ſin, and drag it to Execution, as the Servants of *Ahaſhuerus* were to lay hold of *Haman*, and cover his face as a ſon of death, when their Prince did but vent his wrath conceived againſt him? *Eſther* 7.8. Certainly, were but the love of God well kindled in our boſoms, we ſhould even ſpit fire on the face of any that durſt tempt us to ſin againſt him.

SECT. IV.

4. THe properties of ſin diſcovered by the Word of God. I ſhall content my ſelf with three. It hath 1. A defiling, 2. A diſturbing, 3. A damning property.

Firſt

First, A defiling property, called *Filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*, 2 Cor. 7. 1. It beſmears both. The *whole world* is ſaid *to lie in wickedneſs*, as a beaſt in his dung and ordure, or as a rotten Carcaſs in its ſlime and putrefaction, 1 *John* 5. 19. It is that Leproſie which infects man, and the very houſe he lives in alſo. Wherefore did God ſend the flood in *Noah's* time, but to waſh away that filthy generation as dung from the face of the earth? But becauſe this Peſt-houſe of the world is not cleared ſufficiently, it is reſerv'd for a more thorough Purgation by fire at the laſt day. Do but think, Chriſtian, what a beauty Man was, till he was pock-broken (if I may ſay ſo) by ſin, and what a glory ſhined upon the whole Creation before ſin by its poyſonful breath had dimm'd and blaſted it; and then gueſs what a filthy thing it is, what a ſtrong poyſon it is that not only diffuſed its malignity through the ſoul and body of man, but had ſuch direful effects upon the whole compages and frame of the viſible Creation, that it will never come to its firſt beauty, till, like a batter'd canker'd piece of Plate, it be melted and refined by an univerſal conflagration. And is not your ſoul yet loathed with the thoughts of ſin? Some Beaſts (they ſay) the *Ermin* for one, will dye before ſhe will be got into the dirt to defile her beautiful skin; and wilt thou, Chriſtian, and that after it hath coſt Chriſt his blood to purchaſe his Spirit for thy cleanſing, bedabble thy ſelf in ſins Puddle? God forbid. Did *Ezekiel* ſo abhorre to eat mans dung impoſed on him by God? that he cryes out, *Ah Lord God! behold, my ſoul hath not been polluted, &c.* Ezek. 4. 14. And is any unclean luſt which God himſelf compares to no better thing, ſo dainty a bit as to be deſired by thee, Chriſtian, who haſt ſate at Chriſts Table, and knoweſt what entertainment there is to be had? Methinks thou ſhouldſt rather cry out with the Propher, Ah Lord! my ſoul hath not, or at leaſt let it not be polluted with this abhominable thing. 1.

Secondly, A diſturbing property. Sin, it breaks the peace of the ſoul, yea of the whole world: It brings confuſion with it, and makes the place a ſeat of War wherever it comes. An Army of Evils are at its Heels, to ſet down where it is lodged: *If thou doſt not well, ſin lieth at the door*, Gen. 4. 7. *There is no peace to the wicked, ſaith my God*, Iſa. 57. 21. Here is 2.

Gods hand we see to the Warrant, sentencing the sinner to the Rack of a self-torturing conscience. Who is able to express the anguish which an Accusing Conscience feels! and those dreadful fits of convulsion with which it rends and tears it self! One you hear roaring and crying out, *There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither any rest in my bones, because of my sin*, Psa. 38. 3. Another, *While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted*, Psa. 88. 15. A third, *My punishment is greater than I can bear*, Gen. 4. 13. And a fourth, so unable to stand under the clamour of his guilt, that he runs to the Halter, and Hangs himself to get out of the Din and Dolour it makes in his ears, *Matth.* 27. 5. And is not he like to be well cured of his torment, that throws himself into Hell-fire to find ease? And as sin disturbs the inward peace of the soul, so the outward peace of the world. What else but sin hath put the world in an uproar, and set all the creatures together by the ears? *From whence come warres and fightings among you? come they not from your lusts that War in your Members?* Jam. 4. 1. This sets nearest relations bitter feud, firing the house over their heads, that Husband and Wife, Parents and Children, cannot abide together under one Roof. *Dalilah* she betrayes her Husband into his bloody enemies hands: And *Absalom* riseth up to take away the life of his dear father. This is the Whisperer that *separates chief friends*, and makes those that have drunk of our Cup, to lift up the heel upon us; and with whom we have taken sweet counsel together, to plot our ruine, and give counsel against our very life. In a word, such a kindle-fire sin is, that the flames it kindles, flye not only from one Neighbours house to the other, but from one Nation to another. All the water in the Sea that runs between Kingdom and Kingdom, cannot quench the Wars it raiseth: But it makes men that live at one end of the World, thirst for the blood and treasure of those that live at the other: So that the earth is but as a Cock-pit, where there is little else but fighting and killing one another. And is this the Guest thou canst find in thy heart to bid welcome within thy bosome?

3 *Thirdly*, And lastly, *A damning property*. If all the mischief sin did us was in this world, it were bad enough; but considering our short stay here, it would give some ease to our thoughts, that

that we should have done with it and this life together: But to be worryed here by it, and damned for it also to eternal torments in another world, this is intolerable! Methinks that place *Mat.* 25. 41. *Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire*, should make us sit down and consider, whether any sin be so pleasurable or desirable, as should make it worth lying in endless torments to obtain and enjoy it a few fleeting days and months, that are at an end almost as soon as their beginning commenceth. Thou knoweſt, Sinner, already the best of thy sinful pleasure, but not the worst of thy punishment, which is so great as loseth its chief emphasis by translating it into our language, and cloathing it with expressions borrowed even from those things that most dread us in this life: Alas, what is the fire and brimstone we see and fear so much here, to that which burns in the infernal Lake! Truly, little more than painted fire in the Wall, is to that which burns on our hearth: This in our Chimney was made for our use and comfort chiefly, but that fire in Hell (whether material or not, is not material to know) is for no other end than to torment sinners in: This in our Kitchin is kindled by a little puff of wind, and quenched by a little water; *but the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle that*, Isa. 30.33. And where shall we find Buckets to quench that which God kindles? They say, Smelling of the earth is healthful for the body; and taking in the scent of this sulphureous pit by frequent meditation, cannot but be as wholesome for the soul. If many had descended thus into Hell while on earth, their souls had not, 'tis like, dropt into Hell, when their bodies fell into the grave. O Christian, be sometimes walking in the company of those places of Scripture, which set out the state of the damned in Hell, and their exquisite torments there. This is the true *house of mourning*, and the going into it by serious meditation, is a Soveraign means to make *the living lay it to heart*; and laying it to heart, there is the less fear that thou wilt throw thy self by thy impenitency into this so uncomfortable a place, who art offer'd so fairly a Mansion in Heavens blisseful Palace, upon thy Faith and Repentance.

CHAP. XXVI.

Some Scripture Answers fitted to the common Arguments of the Tempter (with which he usually enticeth to sin) are here brought to the Christian's Hand for his defence

2. PRovide thy self with Scripture-Answers to Satans false Reasonings, with which he puts a fair colour on his foul motions, the better to gain thy consent. He is wily, thou hadst need be wary. He doth not only propound the sinful object, but also sets a fair gloss upon it, and urges the soul with Arguments to embrace his offer. And when sin comes thus forth *Goliah*-like, it is not *Saul*'s Armour, but the smooth stones of the brook, not thy own resolution, but the Divinity of Scripture-Arguments that can preserve thee, or prostrate thy enemy. Now thou wilt find in the *Word* an Answer put into thy mouth to refell all Satan's Sophistry. And this indeed is to be an *Appollos*, mighty in the Scriptures, when we can stop the Devils mouth, and choak his bullets with a word seasonably interposed betwixt us and the temptation.

It will not therefore be amiss to give a few instances whereby this direction may be made more easily practicable in the hand of weaker Christians.

SECT. I.

SOmetimes Satan thus insinuates himself into a soul. What man? will one sin, if yielded to, so much hurt thee? One mole doth not marre the beauty of the face, nor can one sin spoyle the beauty of thy soul; and it is no more that I am a suitor for. If I bade thee wallow in every puddle, thou might'st well abhor the motion; But why art thou so afraid of one spot being seen on thy garment? The best Jewel hath its flaw, and the holyest Saint his failing. 1.

Now to refell this motion, when so mannerly and modestly proposed;

First, The Word will tell thee that no sin goes single. It is impossible to embrace or allow one sin, and be free of others. For *Answ.* 1.

First, He that yields to one sin, casts contempt upon the Authority that made the whole Law, and upon this account breaks it all: *Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*, James 2. 10. And he gives the reason in the next words, *For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill.* Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill thou art a transgressor of the Law. Not that he is guilty of all *distributively*, but *collectively*, as *Estius* well notes. For the Law is one *Copulative*; one Commandment cannot be wrong'd, but all are interessed in the same; as the whole body suffers by a wound given to one part: *God spake all these words*, Exod. 20. They are ten words, but one Law.

Secondly, By allowing one sin, we disarm and deprive our selves of having a conscientious Argument to defend our selves against any other sin. He that can go against his conscience in one, cannot plead conscience against any other: For if the Authority of God awes him from one, it will from all: *How can I do this, and sin against God?* said *Joseph*. I doubt not but his Answer would have been the same, if his Mistress had bid him lye for her, as now when she enticed him to lie with her. The ninth Commandment would have bound him as well as the seventh.

venth. Hence the Apostle exhorts, *Not to give place to the devil*, Eph. 4. 27. Implying, by yielding to one, we lose our ground, and what we lose, he gains; and let him alone to improve advantages. The little Wimble once entred, the Workman can then drive a great Nail: One sin will widen thy swallow a little, that thou wilt not so much strein at the next.

Thirdly, Allow one sin, and God will give you over to other sins; *Rom.* 1. 23. *Wherefore God also gave them up unto uncleanness.* The *Gentiles* gave themselves to Idolatry, *ver.* 22. and God gave them up unto other beastly lusts. When *Judas* began to play the Thief, I question whether he meant to turn Traytour; No, his Treason was a punishment for his Thievery. He allowed himself in a secret sin, and God gave him up to one more open and horrid. But

2. *Secondly*, Suppose thou couldst (which is impossible) take one sin into thy bosome, and shut all the rest out, yet the Word will tell thee *First*, That thou art a servant to that one sin, *Rom.* 6. 16. *His servants you are, to whom ye obey.* And consequently the Devil's servants, whose Kingdom you endeavour to hold up by defending though but this one Castle against God your Maker. Neither will it excuse thee to say thou intendest not so. Haply, Covetousness is thy sin, and it is thy profit thou aimest at, not siding with the Devil against God. Though this is not thy express end who sinnest, yet it is the end of the sin which thou committest, and of Satan that puts thee upon the work, and so will be charged upon thee at last. The common Souldier ordinarily looks no higher than his pay, this is it draws him into the field, yet they make themselves Traytours by assisting him that leads them on against their *Prince*; and it will not serve the turn for them to say they fought for their pay, and not to dethrone him. *Ahab sold himself to work evil in the sight of the Lord*, 1 King. 21. 20. And yet we read not that he made any express Covenant with the Devil; but the meaning is, he did that which in effect amounted to no less. He knew, that if he sinned, he should pay his soul for it, and he would have his lust, notwithstanding he was acquainted with its price, and therefore interpretatively he sold his soul that he might enjoy his sin. *Secondly*, Thou mayst learn from the Word, That thou canst not be a servant to any one sin, and to God at the same time;

Mat.

Mat. 6. 24. *You cannot serve two Masters; you cannot serve God and Mammon.* By Mammon is meant one particular lust, *Covetousness.* One body may as well have two souls, as one soul two Masters. One soul hath but one love; and two cannot have the Supremacy of it. I have heard indeed of a Wretch that said, *He had one soul for God, and another for the Devil also*; but if he hath one soul in Hell, I am afraid he will not find another for Heaven; and one sin will as certainly send thee thither, as a thousand. *Be not deceived; neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, &c. shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* He doth not only exclude him that is *all these*, but *any of these.* It is certain, all men shall die; but all do not die of the same disease. And as certain all impenitent sinners shall be damn'd, but one is damn'd for one, and a second for another, but all meet at last in the same Hell.

Sect. II.

MAY be thou art tempted to sin by an opportunity of committing it in secret, where thou shalt not pay the loss of thy credit for the purchase of thy pleasure. This was the snare the simple young mans foot was taken in, *Prov.* 7. 18. his strumpet tells him, *the good man was from home*, the coast was clear: They might drink their stoln waters, without fear of being indicted for the Theft. Too many, alas, whom shame of the world keeps from knocking at the fore-door, are easily perswaded to sin if they may slip in at the postern. *Saul* himself, though ashamed to go to a Witch in his Princely Robe, because he had possest the world with an opinion of his hatred of that sin, by putting such to death; yet is not afraid to go *incognito* to one. Therefore as it added much to the weight of the temptations with which the Devil assaulted Christ, that he came to him in the Wilderness and solicited him, but to a private, yea secret acknowledging of him, where none could tell Tales what passed between them. So it doth to the glory of that compleat Victory which Christ got over Satan in them all. And how got Christ it, but by this Sword of the Word? Take thou, Christian, therefore 2.

the

the ſame weapon up to defend thy ſelf againſt the ſame enemy.

1. *Firſt*, The Word will tell thee, that God is privy to thy moſt ſecret ſins, *Pſalm* 90. 8. *Thou haſt ſet our iniquities before thee, our ſecret ſins in the light of thy countenance.* They are as plainly ſeen by him, as any thing can be by us at Noon-day. Nay, he doth not only ſee and know them, but he ſets them before him as a mark to ſhoot his Arrows of vengeance at. So *Prov.* 15. 3. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good.* As he ſees when thou ſhutſt thy cloſet to pray in ſecret, and will reward thy ſincerity; ſo he ſeeth when thou doſt it to ſin in ſecret, and will reward thy hypocriſie. Now, if *a King ſitting on his Throne, ſcattereth away all evil with his eyes*, Prov. 20. 8. how much more powerful would the eye of God, if ſeen looking on us, chaſe away the moſt ſecret motion that ſtirreth in our heart to ſin! Better all the World to ſee thee, than God, who hath the wrong done him by the ſin, and therefore concern'd in juſtice to do himſelf right upon thee. He cannot let any ſin go unpuniſht, becauſe a righteous Judge: But there are ſome ſins which require a more immediate hand of divine vengeance than other, and therefore called, *Crying ſins.* And they are ſuch, which either by the place and power of the Offender, man dares not puniſh, or elſe ſo ſecretly committed, that man cannot take cognizance of the Fact. As *Cain's* bloody Murther on his Brother, *Gen.* 4. 10. *Thy Brothers blood cryeth.*

2. *Secondly*, The Word will inform thee of an informer that thou haſt in thy own boſome; Thy Conſcience, I mean, which goes along with thee, and is witneſs to all thy fine-laid plots, and what it ſees it writes down, for it is a Court of Record; thou canſt not ſin ſo faſt, but it can write after thee; and the pen with which Conſcience writes down our ſins, hath a ſharp nib, it cuts deep into the very heart and ſoul of the ſinner. The Heathens *their thoughts* are ſaid *to accuſe them*, Rom. 2. 15. And no torment in the World comparable to an accuſing conſcience. *The Spirit of a man will ſuſtain his infirmity, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* Prov. 18. 14. Who? Not men, not Angels. *Nullus oculus moleſtior cuiq; ſuo: Non eſt aſpectus quem tenebroſa conſcientia ſuffugere magis velit, minus poſſit*

Bern.

Bern. No eye affrights a ſinner more than his own; it is that which he moſt deſires to run from, but leaſt can. Such a poor wretch is like *Regulus* in his barrel ſtuck with Nails, which way ſoever he turns himſelf, *in vulnus in clinat*, he is prickt and wounded. O read thoſe ſad inſtances of *Cain*, *Saul*, and *Judas*, with others upon Scripture-record, who have been on this Rack, and thou wilt be afraid to ſin where Conſcience ſtands by.

Thirdly, Conſult the *Word*, and thou wilt find, that God uſually hath put them to ſhame in this world, that have promiſed themſelves moſt ſecreſie in their ſinning. It is one of Gods names to be a *Revealer of ſecrets*, Dan. 2. 47. And among other ſecrets, he forgets not to bring to light theſe *hidden things of darkneſs*, 1 Cor. 6. 5. thoſe ſins that are forged in a darker ſhop than others, and that often in this world. Indeed the Attribute of his Omniſcience ſuffers deeply by ſecret ſins: In theſe men ſpeak what baſe thoughts they have of God, as if he were a God of the day, and not of the night; therefore to vindicate this Attribute, and to ſtrike an inward fear thereof into the hearts of men, he doth dig theſe Foxes out of their holes wherein they earth themſelves, and expoſe their ſins to the view of the world, which they thought none ſhould have known beſides themſelves and their partners in the ſin. Such an effect had the diſcovery of *Ananias* and *Saphira's* ſecret ſin, *Acts* 5. 11, 13. *And great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard theſe things.* See therefore how God hath befooled men when they have Arted it moſt in packing their ſins, to hide them from the Worlds eye. No Art was wanting in the *Patriarchs* to conceal their unnatural ſin againſt their Brother: What a fair probable Tale do they tell the old man their father, who believed all, and enquired no further? How true were they among themſelves (though ſo many in the plot?) that none of them ſhould blab it out at one time or another, was ſtrange. How long did this ſleep before diſcover'd? And what a ſtrange providence to bring their wickedneſs to light? So *Gehazi* play'd his part cunningly enough one would think, which made him ſo bold to come before his Maſter, and impudently lye to his head, not dreaming the leaſt that he was privy to his ſin; yet this man is found out, and for the garments he got of *Naaman* by a lye,

he had another given of the Lord, which he was to wear as a Livery of his sin, for he was cloathed with a *leprosie*; A *garment* not as others, to *hide* his shame, but to *discover* it to all the world; A *garment* more lasting, than the two change of suits he had from the *Syrian*; for this lasted him all his life; neither was it then worn out, but to be put on by his children after him, 2 *Kings* 5. 27. In a word, be he never such a Saint, yet if he goes about to save himself from the shame of a sin by any secret plot of wickedness, he takes the direct way to bring that upon him which he contrives to keep off. *Uriahs* blood was shed only as a sinful expedient to save *Davids* credit, that would have suffer'd, if his folly with *Barsheba* should become a Town-talk: And how sped he with this his plot? Ah poor man! all comes out to his greater shame: This engaged God to lay him open; *David* shall know that *God* will be as tender of his own honour, as he is of his credit; *For thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the Sun*, 2 Sam. 12. 12. Yea, *David* himself at last is sick of his own plot; and was not at first more studious to hide his sin, than he was afterwards willing to acknowledge it, and therefore we find him *Psa.* 51. standing as it were in a white sheet, and doing voluntary penance for his sin in all the Churches of God so long as the Scriptures shall be read in their Assemblies to the end of the world.

SECT. III.

3. MAY be thou art tempted to sin by the example of others. Indeed though Example be *an Inartificial* Argument, yet is it of great force with many; especially when the persons quoted in favour of a sin, be either the most, or thought to be the best. When most, they carry presently with them those that are false-hearted, or weak-headed, as dead fishes and light straws, swim with the stream: for with such shame strikes the greatest stroke, and a multitude to bear one company in a sin, takes away the shame of it: *Where all go naked, few will blush*; they rather are exposed to shame that will be singular, and not do as the rest. As *Micaiah* who was made a scorn because he would not

not tune his Pipe to *Ahab's* ear, nor joyn with the whole Colledge of his flattering Chaplains in their judgment. Or if they be ſuch who have the reputation for wiſdom and piety, then it oft proves a ſnare to them that are none of the worſt; which ſhould make all of high place or eminent grace, very circumſpect what opinion or practice they eſpouſe. The Devil is very brag, when he can get ſuch to ſet their hand to his Teſtimonial. The Countrey will ſoon ring of this, and their example be ſhewn every where to draw in others. Why, ſuch a one is of this opinion, he holds this, and doth that, and I hope he is one you reverence and honour.

Now in this caſe, conſult with the Word, and it will bring thee off this temptation.

Firſt, The Word commands, that we bring the examples of men (be they who they will) to the teſt of the Word: Is it their Opinion that is quoted? *To the Law, and to the Teſtimony, if they ſpeak not according to this Word, it is becauſe there is no light in them*, Iſa. 8. 20. It is the light which a man carries in his Lanthorn, for which we follow him; That gone we leave him. Now we ſee by this Scripture, he hath no light, that hath not the Word to vouch his Opinion: So that neither knows he whither himſelf goes, nor we whither ſuch a one will lead us. *Again*, Is it the practice of another that is laid before thee for thy Copy to write after? What ſaith the Word? *Follow not a multitude to do evil*, Exodus 23. 2. Examples are not our Warrant, but Precepts: Neither will it procure a man a diſcharge, becauſe he had a preſident in his ſinne. *Adam* indeed ſaid the Woman gave him the Apple, but it did not excuſe him from paying the Reckoning with Her; ſhe was indeed firſt in the tranſgreſſion, yet both met in the puniſhment. Wouldſt thou eat poyſon, becauſe another dares be ſo bold to be thy Taſter? Surely his example cannot make the poyſon leſs deadly to thee that do'ſt pledge him.

Secondly, The Word will tell thee, that the beſt of Saints do not alwayes foot it right, but too oft are found to tread awry: *In many things we offend all*, James 3. 2. And he that is himſelf ſubject to ſtep awry, may alſo lead thee

aside. Therefore *Paul*, as holy a man as lived, when he calls others after him, would have them follow him with their eyes open, to see whether he followed Christ, 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ.* The holyest life of the best Saint on earth, is but an imperfect transsation of the perfect rule of Holiness in the Word; and therefore must be tryed by it. Hence it is the Character of sincerity, to look to the way rather than the company. *The high-way of the upright is to depart from evil*, Proverbs 16. 17. He consults with the Word, whether the way be Good, or Evil: If he finds it Evil, he will not into it to bear another company, no though he be a Saint. Indeed God suffers some to step awry, for the proof of others. Thus, *Heresies come, that they who are approved, may be made manifest*, 1 Cor. 11. 19. And *Deuteronomy* 13. 1. *Thou shalt not hearken to the words of that Prophet, for the Lord thy God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart.*

Thus I have given a few instances by which you see how this Sword of the Word (as that in the *Cherubims* hand) may be turned every way to preserve the Christian from venturing to sin upon any pretence whatever it be.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

Two Directions more, How to use the Word for our defence against temptations to sinne.

HIDE the Word in thy heart. This was *David's* preservative, *Psal.* 119. 11. 3.
Thy Word I have hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. It was not the Bible in his hand to read it, not the Word on his tongue to speak of it, nor in his head to get a notional knowledge of it; but the hiding it in his heart, that he found effectual against sin. It is not meat in the dish, but stomack that nourisheth; not physick in the glass, but taken into the body that purgeth. *Now, heart* in Scripture, though it be used for all the faculties of the soul, yet principally for the *Conscience*, and the *affections.*

SECT. I.

FOR the Conscience, 1 *John* 4. 20. *If our heart condemn* 1.
us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. That is, if our Conscience condemn us justly, to be sure our case is sad, because God knows by us more than we by our selves, and can charge us with many sins that conscience is not privy to.

Now,

Now, Thus Christian labour to hide the Word in thy heart, that is, in thy conscience; let it there have a Throne, and it will keep thee in a holy awe.

First, Look upon the Word as stampt with divine Authority, the Law which the Great God gives thee his poor creature to walk by. This impreſt on thy conscience, would make thee tremble at the thought of a sin, which is the Traytours Dagger that strikes at God himself, by the contempt it casts upon his Law. And if some Assassinants (intending to stab a Prince) have been so over-awed with a few beams of Majesty shot from his mortal brow, that their hearts would not serve them to make the horrid attempt: How much more must the dread of the great God's Majesty, darted from his Word into the creatures conscience, deterre him from practising any Treason against his Maker? *Psal.* 119. 161. *Princes persecuted me without a cause, but my heart standeth in awe of thy Word.* As if he had said, I had rather incurre their wrath for my holyness, than make thy Word my enemy by my sin.

Secondly, Look upon the Word of God as that Law by which thou art to be judged at the great day. *Rom.* 2. 13. *God will judge the secrets of all men according to my Gospel.* Then the book of thy conscience shall be open'd, and compared with this, and accordingly will sentence of life or death be pronounced by Christ thy Judge. Thou mayst know before-hand how it will go with thee at that day; if now thou canst not stand before the Word as open'd by a poor Minister, and applied by thy own conscience, what will you do when it is opened by Christ? Now thy conscience from the Word condemnes thee, but not finally; for by thy timely repentance and faith, the sentence of this private Court may be reversed, and the Word which even now bound thee over to death, will acquit and justifie thee. But at that great day of Assize there will be a final decision of thy cause. If then the judgment goes against thee, thou art a lost man for ever. No reversing the sentence to be expected, not so much as a reprieve to stay the execution: But as the Word goeth out of the Judges mouth, the sinners face is covered to be immediately delivered into the Tormentours hands. And darest thou now, O man, bid any lust welcome, while thou seest the gibbet set up, and the everlasting chains prepared, in which the Word

Word of God Dooms every ſinner to hang? Canſt thou read thy ſentence, and yet like thy ſin that brings it inevitably upon thy head?

Secondly, Heart in Scripture is moſt frequently taken for the will and affections, *My Son, give me thy heart*, Prov. 23. *i. e.* thy love. So *Deut.* 10. 12. *To love him, and to ſerve the Lord thy God with all thy heart.* And thus, Chriſtian, to hide the Word in thy heart, would be a rare Antidote againſt the poyſon of ſin. The chains of love are ſtronger than the chains of fear. *Herods* love of *Herodias*, was too hard for his fear of *John*. He had ſome hold of his conſcience that awed him, and bound his hands awhile: But his Minion had his affections, and the heart can unbind the hands; his love to her made him ſhake off his reſpect to him, and at laſt embrue his hands in his blood. He that is only priſoner to the command, and bound to his good behaviour by the chains of terrour which the threatning claps upon his conſcience, may have theſe knockt off, and then he will ſhake off his obedience alſo. But he that loves the Word, and the purity of its precepts, cannot turn traytour. When ſuch a one ſins, he makes as deep a wound in his own heart, as in the Law; and therefore trembles at diſpleaſing God. *Pſal.* 119. 119, 120. *I love thy teſtimonies; my fleſh trembleth for fear of thee.* O that is the bleſſed fear, which is the daughter of Love. 2.

Now to enflame thy heart with love to the Word, conſider, that it is the faithfulleſt Monitor, and the ſweeteſt comforter thou haſt in all the world.

Firſt, It is thy faithfulleſt Monitor: It tells thee plainly of all thy faults, and will not ſuffer ſin to lie upon thee, but points to the enemy that hunts for the precious ſouls life; it diſcovers all the deſigns and plots Satan and thy beloved luſts have againſt thee This made *David* love it ſo dearly, *Pſal.* 19. 10. *Moreover, by them thy ſervant is warned*; beſides all its other good Offices it doth for thee, it warns thee of every danger, and ſhews thee how to eſcape it. O how ſhould this endear it to thee! Did *Ahaſhuerus* heap ſuch abundant honour upon *Mordecai*, who had but once been a means to ſave his life by diſcovering a Treaſon plotted againſt his perſon? How much more ſhouldſt thou honour and love the good Word of God, which hath

hath so oft saved thy soul out of thy spiritual enemies hands, and doth dayly give thee warning how to escape the snares of sin, without which it were impossible for thee to find them out, or avoid them! Was *David* so affected with the wisdom and love of *Abigal* in the advice she gave him, whereby he was kept from shedding blood in his fury, that he took her into his bosome to be his Wife, as a reward of her kindness to him? And shall not the counsel the Word hath given thee, make thee in love much more with it!

Secondly, The Word is thy sweetest Comforter. When the poor soul is distressed with guilt, and conflicteth with the terrors of divine wrath for his sins, O what miserable comforters then are this worlds pleasures and treasures! How little can any creature contribute to the ease of such a one! no more than he who standing upon the shore, and sees his friend drowning in the Sea, but knows not how to reach any help to him. It is the Word alone that can walk upon those waves, and come to the souls relief. This is able to restore the soul, and buoy it up from the bottom of the Sea of despair. Though the soul be with those Mariners at its wits end, and knows not what to do, yet then the Word stands up (as *Paul* before them) and as it were thus speaks to him, Poor soul, thou shouldst have hearkned to my voice, and not have loosed from thy harbour by sinning against God, to come to this harm and loss: But be of good cheer, do thus and thus, repent of thy folly, and speedily turn to thy God in Christ Jesus, and there shall be no loss of thy life. *There is forgiveness with the Lord, therefore he may be feared.* And so in all other troubles, this sends in the Saints comfort; when the world gives him gall, this brings Wine; when it meets with nothing but crosses and vexations from that, this sweetly recreates and cheers his spirits. Here the Christian hath those cooling waters with which he quencheth and allays all his sorrows. And you know what a treasure, a spring or fountain is accounted in dry and hot Countreys. Surely, Christian, when thou considerest how many a sweet draught thou hast had from the Wells of salvation, thou wilt cry out with *David*, *Psal.* 119. 93. *I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickned me.* I do not wonder to see thy enemy endeavour to stop thy Well at which thou shouldst draw thy comfort, but that he should

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be able to perſwade thee to do it thy ſelf is ſtrange.

SECT. II.

4. PLead the promiſe againſt ſin at the Throne of Grace. He that hath Law on his ſide (we ſay) may ſue the King; and he that hath a promiſe on his ſide, may with a humble boldneſs commence his ſuit with God. As the veins in the body have Arteries to attend them with ſpirits, ſo precepts in the word, have promiſes to inſpirit the Chriſtian, and impower him with ſtrength for his duty. Is there a command to pray? There is alſo a promiſe to enable for prayer. *Zech.* 12. 10. *Rom.* 8. 26. Doth God require us to give him our heart? *My ſon, give me thy heart*, Prov. 23. 26. The promiſe ſaith, *He will give a new heart to us*, Ezek. 36. 26. Doth he command us to mortifie our corruptions? And doth he not promiſe, *ſin ſhall not have dominion over us?* Rom. 6. 14. Now to obtain this promiſe, thou muſt plead and preſs it believingly at the Throne of grace. *Quod lex imperat, fides impetrat.* VVhat the precept commands, the prayer of faith begs and receives. Look therefore thou takeſt God in thy way: Firſt beſiege heaven, and then fear not overcoming ſin and Hell, when thou haſt conquer'd Heaven. Now thou warreſt at Gods coſt, and not thy own; he that ſets thee on, will bring thee off. *David* was a man at Arms, and could handle his weapon againſt this enemy, as well as another, yet dares not promiſe himſelf ſucceſs till he hath made God his ſecond, *Pſal.* 119. 132. *Order my ſteps in thy Word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.* But if thou thinkſt to ſteal a victory by the ſtrength of thy own reſolution, expect an overthrow. And it will be a mercy thou ſhouldſt be ſo ſerved; for a foyl will learn thee humility for the future, but a victory would encreaſe thy pride; and that is a ſad victory, when one ſin carries away the ſpoyles which thou haſt taken from another. *Jehoſophat* took the right courſe to ſpeed, who though he had almoſt a Million of men he could draw into the field, and that without dreining his Gariſons, yet beſpeaks Gods help, as if he had not a man to fight for him, 2 *Chron.* 20. 12. *VVe have*

no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee. If an *Alexander*, or a *Cæsar* had been at the head of such an Army, I warrant you, they would have known what to have done, and not doubted to carry all before them. But *Jehosophat*, a holy humble man, was better instructed. He knew an hoast signifieth nothing, which hath not the Lord of hoasts with them, and that the most valiant can find neither heart nor hand in the day of Battel without his leave who made both: Nor wilt thou, Christian, be able to use thy grace in an houre of temptation, without new grace from God to excite and inforce what thou hast already received from him; and if thou expectest this from him, he expects to hear from thee; neither speaks it God unwilling to give what he hath promised, because he payes not the debt of the promise untill it be sued for at the Throne of Grace. No, God takes this method, only to secure his own glory in the giving, and also to greaten our comfort by receiving it in this way of prayer, which is a fit expedient to attain both.

CHAP. XXVIII.

How the Christian may use the Sword of the Word for his defence in any great affliction, outward or inward. And one Direction towards it insisted upon.

I Come now to give some little help by way of Direction, How the Christian may use this Sword of the Word for his defence against the fourth Enemy and the last, but not the least. And this is an Army made up of many bands of Afflictions, which from without invade, and within distress him. The Christian in this-

this world, ſtands not as you may ſee ſome houſes, ſo fenced and ſhadowed with hills or woods, that the wind beats but upon one ſide of them. No, he lies open to ſtorms and tempeſts from all quarters of the Heaven: we read of a ſtrange kind of wind that at once *ſmote the four corners of the Houſe*, in which *Jobs* children were. Truly thus the Chriſtians afflictions beſet him round, no corner left unaſſaulted, and very often he is ſmitten on all ſides at once; croſt in his eſtate, feeble in his body, and afflicted in his ſpirit all at once; and when ſo many Seas of ſorrows meet, it is no eaſie work for the poor Chriſtian's heart to ſtand unbroken amidſt the concurrent violence of their waves. Though this is moſt certain, that thoſe dejections and perturbations with which the minds of the beſt Saints are ſo diſcompoſed and rufled, yea ſometimes diſmayed and diſtreſſed, cannot be charg'd upon any deficiency of the Goſpels principles for their ſupport and comfort; but rather on their own impotence and unskilfulneſs to apply them in their ſeveral exigences. My preſent task is to drop a few words of counſel to the weak Chriſtian, how he may uſe and weild this Sword of the Word for his defence and comfort in any affliction without, or diſtreſs of ſpirit from within, that may aſſault him. And here I muſt not deſcend to particular caſes: that were a voluminous work, and not ſo proper for this place, but only content my ſelf with ſome general Rules, that may be applicable to all. Now the cordial and reſtorative part of the Word (that I mean which principally is prepared and provided for the ſouls comfort in all its diſcomforts and diſtreſſes) is contained in the promiſes; theſe well ſtudied and improved, can alone make thee a comfortable Chriſtian.

Now if thou wouldſt improve the promiſes, ſo as not to be run down and trampled upon by Satan in any day of diſtreſs that comes upon thee, but comfortably lift up thy head in hope and confidence above the waves of thy preſent ſorrows; then hearken to what follows in a few general Rules prepared for thy help.

Firſt, Let it be thy firſt and chief care to get thy intereſt in, and right to the promiſes, cleared up. For this is the hinge on which the great diſpute betwixt thee and Satan will move in the day of trouble, except the caſe be reſolved before that overtakes thee. O it is ſad for a poor Chriſtian to ſtand at the 1.

door of the promise in the dark night of Affliction afraid to draw the Latch, whereas he should then come as boldly for shelter, as a child into his fathers house: *Come my people, enter thou into thy Chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thy self, as it were, for a little moment, untill the indignation be over-past*, Isa. 26. 20. He that hath his Title to the promise proved from the Word to his own conscience, will not be wrangled easily out of his comfort. *Naboth* would not part with his inheritance for the pleasure or displeasure of a King; but stands up in the defence of his right to death: And so resolves *Job*, *Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me*, Job 27. 5. This was his evidence for Heaven; and therefore Satan used his best wits to make him throw it up, but never could effect it: his Title was clear, and he will not be disputed out of it by Satan, no nor afraid to vouch it before God himself, when God in his providence seemed most to disown him, and to handle him as an enemy, *Thou knowest that I am not wicked*! Job 10. 7. He saith not that he hath no sin, but in an humble Appeal to God defends his state, that *He is not wicked*. And this kept the Charriot of his Hope on its wheels all along his sad sufferings; that it was never quite overthrown, though sometimes it seemed to totter and shake.

Sect. I.

Quest. *But how shall I know whether I have a right to the promises?*

Answ. 1. *First*, Enquire whether thou art united to Christ by faith or no. The promises are not a Common for Swine to root in, but Christs sheep walk, for his flock to feed in. *If ye be Christs, then are ye Abrahams seed, and heirs according to promise*, Gal. 3. 29. The promise is the Joynture, and cannot be had but by taking the person of Christ in Marriage. And Faith is the grace by which the soul gives its consent to take Christ as he is offered in the Gospel; called therefore, *A receiving of Christ*, John 1. 12. There is no doubt but thou hast often been woed in the Ministry of the Word by Christs Spokesmen, and that question hath

hath been put to thee for *Christ*, which was once to *Rebeccah* concerning her taking *Isaac* to Husband, *Wilt thou go with this man?* They have from the Word set him forth in his glories before thee, who he is, and what he brings. Thou hast heard the Articles upon which he is most willing to proceed to Marriage, and take thee as his beloved into his bed and bosome.

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First, That thou send away all other Lovers which have had any pretensions to thee, for he will endure no competitor or partner with him in thy affections. The names of *Baalim* must be taken out of *Israels* mouth, and then God marries himself to her, *Hos.*2.17,18.

Secondly, That thou like his Law as well as his love: Christ will not be Husband, where he may not be Master also.

Thirdly, That thou take him for better and for worse, with his Cross as well as with his Crown, to suffer for him as well as to reign with him. Now, what entertainment hath this motion found with thee? Dost thou upon the discovery made of Christ, take liking in his person? Is he transcendently amiable in thy eye, and precious to thy soul, so as to inflame thee with an insatiable desire of him? Canst thou freely pack away thy once darling lusts to gain him? And leap out of the Arms of all thy carnal delights and sinful pleasures, to be taken into his embraces? Art thou as willing he should be thy Lord, as thy Love? And as content to bow to his Scepter, as lie in his bosome? In a word, Art thou so inamour'd with him, that thou now canst not live without him, nor enjoy thy self, except thou mayst enjoy him? Thy heart is wounded with the Darts which his love and loveliness have shot into it, and he himself carries the balm about him which alone can heal it. Let him now require what he will at thy hands, nothing he commands shall be denied. If he bids thee leave father and fathers house, thou wilt go after him though it be to the other end of the World; if he tells thee thou must be base, and poor in the world for his sake, thou art resolved to beg with him, rather than reign without him, yea die for him, than live without him. Come forth thou blessed of the Lord, and put on the Bracelets of the promises; they are the Love-tokens which I am from Christs hand to deliver, and in his

Name

Name to promise Marriage to thee. Thou art the happy soul, if there be one on earth, that Christ betroths to himself. Languish no longer in thy unbelieving fears. For thy comfort, know, it is not Christs custom to entangle souls affections, and when he hath got their love, then to deny his to them, and cast them off.

SECT. II.

2. ENquire what effect the promises have upon thy soul. All who have right to the promise, are transformed by the promise. As Satan shed his venemous seed into the heart of *Eve* by a promise, *Genes.* 3. 4. *Ye shall not surely dye.* whereupon she presently conceived with sin, and was assimulated into the likeness of his Diabolical Nature, wicked as was the Devil himself. So God useth the promises of the Gospel, called therefore *the immortal seed*; to beget his own image and likeness in the hearts of his elect, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. *Exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature.* That is, be partakers of such heavenly holy qualities and dispositions, as will make you like God himself. The promises of the Gospel have in them a fitness, and (when by the Spirit of God applied) a vertue to purifie the heart, as well as to pacifie the conscience. *Now you are clean* (saith *Christ* to his Disciples) *through the Word which I have spoken to you*, John 15. 3. Lay therefore thy hand upon thy heart, and speak freely poor soul: Have the promises had a sanctifying transforming vertue upon thee? What of God dost thou find in thy heart more since thy acquaintance with the promises than before? Some use promises as a protection for sin, rather than an Argument against it. As sin takes occasion by the Commandment to work in the carnal heart all manner of concupiscence; so many are from the promise emboldned to sin more freely. Like Mountebanks that drink poyson in confidence of their Antidote. Now which way works the promise upon thy heart? If the seal of the promise leaves not the impress of God's image on thee, it ratifies no good to thee. If it produceth no holiness in thee, it brings

brings no joy to thee. In a word, if the promiſe be not to thee a ſeed of grace, it is no evidence for glory. But if thou canſt find it leaves the Superſcription of God upon thee, then it aſſures the love and favour of God to thee.

Sect. III.

ENquire in what poſture thy heart ſtands to the word of command. The promiſe may be is ſweet to thy palate, this thou rouleſt like a lump of ſugar under thy tongue, but are not thy teeth ſet againſt the command, as if it were gall and Wormwood? Thou ſmileſt on the promiſe, but when put in mind of thy duty to the command, then haply thy countenance is changed, and a frown ſits on thy brow; As if God were ſome Auſteer Maſter that breaks his Servants backs with heavy burthens; and thou couldſt wiſh with all thy heart, that a diſpenſation might be procured for thee, to break now and then a command without forfeiting thy claim to the promiſe: But becauſe that is not to be hoped for, thou art ſo kind to thy ſelf, as to give thy ſelf leave to bow down to ſome Idol of pleaſure or profit that thou haſt ſet up in thy heart, and hopeſt God will be merciful to thee, becauſe it is only in this or that one way thou makeſt bold with him in. If this ſhooe fit thy foot, this be the true Character of thy heart (which God forbid) thou haſt no lot belongs to thee in the lap of the promiſe. *We have a comfortable promiſe, Pſal.* 50. 15. but a guard is ſet about it, that no diſobedient wretch ſhould gather its ſweet fruit, *ver.* 16. *But unto the Wicked God ſaith, What haſt thou to do that thou ſhouldſt take my Covenant into thy mouth, ſeeing thou hateſt inſtruction, and caſteſt my words behind thee?* On the other hand, if thou canſt in truth ſay, that it is not the holy command thou art offended with, but with thy ſelf, becauſe thou canſt obey it no more perfectly; that it is not grievous to thee to keep, but break the Laws of God; and though thy foot too often ſlips, yet thy heart cleaves to them, and will not let thee lie where thou falleſt, but up thou getteſt to mend thy pace, and mind thy ſteps better. For thy comfort know poor ſoul, this ſincere reſpect thou haſt 3.

haſt to the Commandment, is a moſt comfortable evidence for thy true Title to the Promiſe. When *David* was able to vouch his love to the Command, he did not queſtion his Title to the promiſe. *Pſalm* 119. 113. there he aſſerts his ſincere affection to the precepts, *I hate vain thoughts, but thy Law do I love.* Mark, he doth not ſay he is *free* from vain thoughts, but he *hates* them; he likes their company no better than one would a pack of Thieves that break into his houſe. Neither ſaith he, that he *fully kept* the Law, but he *loved* the Law, even when he failed of exact obedience to it. Now from this Teſtimony his conſcience brought in for his love to the Law, his faith acts cleerly and ſtrongly on the promiſe in the next words, *Thou art my hiding place, and my ſhield, I hope in thy Word*, Verſ. 114.

Sect. IV.

4. IF thou queſtioneſt thy right to one promiſe, enquire whether thou canſt not diſcern thy intereſt in a ſecond, which if thou canſt, thou mayſt conclude; thou haſt a right to that other thou didſt doubt of, yea and to all the reſt. For as there is a concatenation of graces, he that finds one hath all; ſo of promiſes, he that is heir to one, hath right to all. May be when thou readeſt that promiſe, *Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God*, Matth. 5. 8. The remainders of corruption not yet fully mortified in thy heart, ſcare thee from applying it to thy ſelf as thy portion. But for its next Neighbour-promiſe, *Ver. 7. Bleſſed are they which hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be ſatisfied.* Haply, thou feeleſt ſuch a pinching ſence of thy guilt, and want of holineſs, as will enforce thee to acknowledge, that if ever man in a burning feavour thirſted for drink, or one half-ſtarved deſired food, than doſt thou crave and cry for the righteouſneſs of Chriſt to juſtifie thy perſon, and grace from Chriſt to ſanctifie thy Nature. So that thou canſt not but ſee this promiſe ſpoken to thee. And if this belongs to thee, then the former, and all the other with it. For they are branches in the ſame Covenant, which God doth not diſmember,

ber, but gives it entire with all the branches growing on it to be the Believer's portion: Hence it is they are called *Heirs of promiſe*, Hebrews 6.17. Not Heirs of this promiſe or that, but of *Promiſe*; that is, of the Covenant, which comprehends all the Promiſes of the Goſpel: So that, as he hath hold of the man's whole body, that hath faſt-hold of his hand, though it be but one member of it, becauſe it is knit to the reſt, and by it he may draw the reſt to him: So if thou haſt hold of any one promiſe, thou haſt hold of all other, and mayſt inferre thy right from this to them. And as one may draw out the Wine of a whole Hogſhead at one Tap; ſo may a poor ſoul derive the comfort of the whole Covenant to himſelf through one Promiſe which he is able to own and apply. *We know* (ſaith Saint *John*) *that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the Brethren*, 1 John 3. 14. Eternal life is the Cream and top of all Covenant-bleſſings. Now a poor Chriſtian may, upon the inward feeling of this one Grace of Love in his heart (being the condition annext to this promiſe) know that he is in a ſtate of Life and Happineſs. And why? Becauſe wherever this Grace is in truth, there are all other Saving Graces; Chriſt is not divided in theſe, and conſequently he that can apply this promiſe, hath a right to all.

CHAP. XXIX.

Five Directions more upon the same account.

SECT. I.

Direct. 2. TAKE some pains to sort the Promises (as thou readest the Scriptures) and reduce them to their proper heads. There is great multiplicity of trials and temptations which God is pleased to exercise his Saints with, *Many are the troubles of the righteous*, Psa. 34. And there is variety of promises provided to administer suitable comfort to their several sorrows. The Scriptures are a spiritual *Physick-garden*, where grows an Herb for the cure of every Malady. Now it were of admirable use to the Christian, if he would gather some of every sort, such especially as he hath found most to affect his heart, of which he can say with *Origen*, *Hæc est Scriptura mea*, This portion of Scripture is mine; and then to write such down, as the Physician doth his Receits for this and that disease by themselves. May it not shame the Christian, to see a Scholar know every book in his great Library, and what it treats on, so that he can presently go to any one of them all, and make use of their notions as he hath occasion; and that the Christian who hath but one book to advise with, and that none of the greatest bulk, but sufficient as to make him wise unto salvation, so to make him comfortable in every condition that can befall him, should not be acquainted if not with all, yet with some

some choice promises of every sort, to which he may be able to resort for counsel and comfort in the day of his distress? Now the best time for this work, is, when thou art yet at ease, in the lap of Health and Prosperity. The *Apothecary* gathers his *simples* in the Spring, which he useth in Winter. The *Mariner* provides his Tackling in the Harbour, before he puts forth to sea. And the wise Christian will store himself with promises in Health for Sickness; and in peace, for future perils. It is too late for a man to think of running Home for his Cloak, when on his way he is catcht in a storm. *A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished*, Prov. 22. 3.

Sect. II.

OBserve the full latitude of promises. The Covenant of grace comprehends the weak Christian as well as the strong; *If Children, then Heirs*, Rom. 8. 17. Not if children grown to this Age, or that stature; but *if children*. Christ hath in his Family children of all sizes, some little, and others tall Christians. If thou beest a child, though in the Cradle, the promise is thy portion. *All the promises of God in him are Yea and in him Amen*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. *There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. 8. 1. See here it is the state and relation the creature stands in that gives him his Title to the promise. Some Saints have more grace from Christ than others, and so have more skill to improve these promises than their weaker Brethren, whereby their present profits and incomes from the promise are greater: But they have no more interest in Christ, than the other, and consequently, the Title of the weak Christian is as true to the promise, as of the strong. Shall the foot say, Because I am the lowest member of the body, therefore the Tongue will not speak for me, or the Head take care of me? We will grant thee to be of the least and lowest rank of Christians; yet thou art in Christ, as the foot is in the body. And Christ hath made provision in the promise for all that are in him. We disfigure the promises when we make them look asquint, with 3.

an eye upon one Saint, and not on another, whereas they belong to all; *He that believes on the Son, hath everlasting life*, John 3. 36. Who now is there meant? Only he that believes above doubting? I trow not. He that bids us receive the weak in faith, will not Himself Reject them.

Sect. III.

4. BE much in meditation of the promises. Whence is it that the poor Christian is so distressed with the present affliction that lies upon him, but because he museth more on his trouble, than on the promise? There is that in the promise which would recreate his spirit, if he could but fix his thoughts upon it. When the crying child once fastens on the Teat, and begins to draw down the Milk, then it leaves wrangling, and falls asleep at the breast. Thus the Christian ceaseth complaining of his affliction, when he gets hold on the promise, and hath the relish of its sweetness upon his Heart. *Psalm* 94. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* When a Swarm of Bees dislodge themselves, they are all in a confusion, flying here and there without any order, till at last they are Hived again, then the uproare is at an end, and they fall to work peaceably as before. Truly even so the Christian will find it with his own Heart. God in the promise is the souls Hive, let the Christian dislodge his thoughts thence, and presently they run ryot, and flye up and down as in an affright at the apprehension of the present affliction or temptation that lyes upon him, till he can re-collect himself, and settle his Heart again upon the promise, and then he recovers his former peace and composure. Hence the Spirit of God sounds a retreat to the troubled thoughts of afflicted Saints, and calls them off from poring on that which royls them, in to God, where alone they can be quiet and at ease, *Psal.* 37. 7. *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.* And *David*, finding his soul (like the Dove whose flying over the waters) without all repose, calls it back into the meditation of God and his promise, as the only Ark where it

it could find rest, *Psal.* 116. 7. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul.* The Christians Heart is of that colour, which his most abiding constant thoughts dye it into. Transient, flitting thoughts, be they comfortable or sad, do not much work upon the soul, or alter its temper into joy or sorrow. Neither poyson kills, nor food nourisheth, that doth not stay in the body. No, then the affliction soaks into the Heart, and imbitters the Christian's spirit into perplexing fears and disconsolate dejections, when his thoughts lie steeping in his sorrows from day to day, when like *Her* in the *Gospel*, he is *bowed down with a spirit of infirmity*, that he cannot raise his Heart from the thought of his cross and tryal to meditate on any promise that should refresh him. Such there are, God knows, whom Satan and their own pensive Hearts keep such close prisoners, that no comfortable meditation is suffer'd to speak or stay with them. And again on the other hand; then the promise works effectually, when it is bound upon the Christian's Heart, when he wakes with it, and walks with it. No pain he feels, no danger he fears, can pluck him from this breast, but as *Sampson went on his way eating of the honeycomb*, so he feeding on the sweetness of the promise. Here is a Christian that will sing when another sighs; will be able to spend that time of his affliction in praising God, which others (whose thoughts are scattered and spilt upon what they suffer) too commonly bestow on fruitless complaints of their misery, and discontented speeches which reflect dishonourably upon God himself. Let it be thy care therefore, Christian, to practice this duty of Meditation. Do not only exchange a few words with the promise, as one does with a friend passing by at his door. But invite the promise, as *Abraham* did the *Angels*, Genes. 18. not to pass away, till thou hast more fully enjoyed it. Yea, constrain it as the *Disciples* did *Christ*, to stay with thee all the night of thy affliction. This is *to acquaint our selves indeed with God*, the ready way *to be at peace*. This is the way the Saints have taken to raise their faith to such a pitch, as to triumph over the most formidable calamities: *My Beloved* (saith the *Spouse*) *shall lie all night between my breasts*. That is, when benighted with any sorrowful afflicting providence, she will pass away the night comfortably in the meditation of his love and loveliness, his beauty and sweetness. Never will the Christian come to a-

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ny kindly heat of comfort in his ſpirit, till he takes this *Abiſhag* of the promiſe into his boſome to cheriſh him, and this will do it indeed. A ſoul that hath learnt this Heavenly Art of Meditation, will feel no more the extremity of any affliction, than you do the ſharpneſs of the cold weather, when you are ſitting by a good fire, or lying in a warm bed. It was a notable ſpeech of *Julius Palmer*, an *Engliſh Martyr*, *To them* (ſaith he) *that have their mind fe ter'd to the body, as a Thief's foot is to a pair of Stocks, it is hard to dye; but if any be able to ſeparate his ſoul from his body, then by the help of God's Spirit, it is no more Maſtery for ſuch a one, than to drink this Cup.* He meant if the creatu e be able to elevate his mind and thoughts above his ſufferings by Heavenly Meditation on the great and precious promiſes, then it were nothing to ſuffer. Such a one his ſoul is in Heaven, and a ſoul in Heaven feels little what the fleſh meets with on earth. Here, O ye Chriſtians, is the glorioufeſt Proſpect to be ſeen on this ſide Heaven! When the Soul ſtands upon this *Piſgah* of Meditation, looking by an eye of faith through the proſpective of the promiſe, upon all the great and precious things laid up by a faithful God for him; It is eaſie to deſpiſe the Worlds love and wrath when there, but alas it is hard for us to get up thither, who are ſo ſhort-breath'd, and ſoon tyred with a few ſteps up this Mount of God. O let us all cry out, as once *David*, *Set me upon the Rock that is higher than I!* And with him in another place, *Who will bring me into the ſtrong City? Wilt not thou, O God?* So, Who will lift us up to this high, holy Hill of Meditation, higher than all the ſurging waves that daſh upon us from beneath, where we may ſee all our creature enjoyments drowned, yet our ſelves not wetſhod? wilt not thou, O God? Yes, our God would do this for us, would we but ſhake off our ſloth, and ſhew by parting with our *Mandrakes* to purchaſe His Company, that we highly prize the ſame. My meaning is, would we but frequently retire from the World, and beſtow ſome of that time in ſecret waiting upon God, which we laviſh out upon inferiour pleaſures, and entertainments of the creature, we ſhould invite God's Holy Spirit to us. Let a wicked man ſet up a luſt for his thoughts to dally with, and the Devil will ſoon be at his Elbow to aſſiſt him. And ſhall we not believe the Holy Spirit as ready to lend his help-

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ing hand to a holy Meditation? Doubtleſs He is. Spread thou thy ſails, and the Spirit will fill them with his heavenly breath: Be but thou the Prieſt to the *Prieſt*, lay the Wood and Sacrifice in order, and fire from heaven will come down upon it. Be thou but careful to provide fuel, gather from the promiſes matter for Meditation, and ſet thy thoughts awork upon it, and the Spirit of God will kindle thy affections. *While I was muſing* (ſaith *David*) *the fire burned*, Pſa. 39. 3. *Iſaac* met his bride in the fields, and the gracious ſoul her beloved, when ſhe ſteps aſide, to walk with the Promiſe in Her ſolitary thoughts.

SECT. IV.

5. PLead the promiſes at the Throne of Grace. This muſt not be disjoyned from the former. Indeed as the Ingredients of an excellent Receipt do not work the cure ſeverally, but as tempered together; ſo theſe directions being ſocial means, muſt not be ſevered, but joyntly obſerved. And this Direction I am now ſpeaking to, beſides an univerſal influence it hath upon all the other, is linked by an eſpecial affinity to the former. In vain do we charge the Gun, if we intend not to let it off. Meditation filleth the heart with heavenly matter, but prayer gives the diſcharge, and poures it forth upon God, whereby he is overcome to give the Chriſtian his deſired relief and ſuccour. The Promiſe is the Bill or Bond, wherein God makes himſelf a Debtor to the Creature. Now, though it is ſome comfort to a poor man that hath no money at preſent to buy bread with, when he reads his Bills and Bonds, to ſee that he hath a great Summe owing him; yet this will not ſupply his preſent wants, and buy him bread. No, it is the putting his Bond in ſuit muſt do this. By meditating on the promiſe thou comeſt to ſee, there is ſupport in, and deliverance out of affliction engaged for: But none will come, till thou commenceſt thy ſuit, and by the prayer of faith calleſt in the debt, *Pſalm* 69. 32. *Your heart ſhall live that ſeek the Lord.* Pſa. 34. 5. *They looked unto him, and were lightned.* God expects to hear from you, before you can expect

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to hear from him. If thou *restrainest prayer*, it is no wonder the mercy promised is retain'd. Meditation it is like the Lawyers studying the case in order to his pleading it at the Barre: When therefore thou hast viewed the promise, and affected thy heart with the riches of it, then ply thee to the Throne of Grace, and spread it before the Lord. Thus *David*, *Psa.* 119.49. *Remember the Word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*

Sect. V.

6. When thou hast sued the promise, act thy faith on the power and truth of God for the performance of it, and that against sence and reason which rise up to discourage thee: For as thy faith is feeble or strong on these, so wilt thou draw little or much sweetness from the promises. The Saints safety lies in the strength and faithfulness of God who is the Promiser; but the present comfort and repose of an afflicted soul, is fetcht in by faith relying on God as such. Hence it is, though all believers are out of danger, when in the saddest condition that can befall them, yet too many alas of them are under fears and dejections of spirit, because their faith acts weakly on a Mighty God, timerously and suspiciously on a faithful God: *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith!* Mat. 8. You see the Leak at which the water came in to sink their spirits, they had *little faith*. It is not what God is in himself, but what our apprehensions at present are of God, that pacifies and comforts a soul in great streights. If a man fear the house will fall on his head in a storm, though it be as unmoveable as a Rock, yet that will not ease his mind till he thinks it so. Were a man under the protection of never so faithful a friend, yet so long as his head is full of fears and jealousies to the contrary, that he will at last leave and cast him off, this man must needs have an uncomfortable life, though without cause. You see then of what importance it is to keep up the vigour and vivacity of thy faith on the power and truth of the promises; and if thou meanest to do this, banish Sence and Reason from being thy Counsellours. How came *Abraham not to*

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staggar in his faith, though the promise was so strange? The *Apostle* resolves us, *He did not consider his own body*, Rom. 4. 19. And what made *Zacharias* reel? He made Sence his Counsellour, and thought he was too old for such news to be true. This is the bane of faith, and consequently of comfort in affliction. We are too prone to carry our faith with *Thomas*, at our fingers ends; and to trust God no further than our hand of sence can reach. It is not farre that sence can reach, and but little further that Reasons pur-blind eye can see. God is oft on his way to perform a promise, and bring joyful news to his afflicted Servants, when Sence and Reason conclude their case desperate. These three, *Sence, Reason*, and *Faith*, are distinct, and must not be confounded. Some things we know by sence, which we do not understand the reason of, as the sympathy of the *Loadstone* with *Iron*, why it draws that the baser metal, and not Gold: And the Mariners Needle espousing the North point rather than any other. Some things we apprehend by Reason, that are not discern'd by Sence. As the magnitude of the Suns body to exceed the Circumference of the earth, which the Eye being Judge, may be almost cover'd with ones Hat: And other things clear to faith, that Dunce and Poze both Sence and Reason. *Paul* knew by faith in that dismal Sea-storm, where *all hope of being saved was taken away* (that is, Sence and Reason being Judges) *not a man should lose his life*, Act. 27. 25. *Be of good chear, for I believe that it shall be even as it was told me.* When the *Angel* smote *Peter* on the side, and bade him *arise quickly and follow me*, he did not allow sence and reason to reply and civil at the impossibility of the thing. How can I walk that am in Fetters? Or to what purpose, when an Iron Gate with-stands us? But he riseth, and his Chains fall off, he follows, and the Iron Gate Officiously opens it self to them. Say not, poor Christian, 'Tis impossible to bear this affliction, or pass that temptation, let faith follow the promise, and God will loose these knots, that Sence and Reason tye. *Luther* bids, *Crucifige illud verbum quare*, Crucifie that word, *Wherefore*. Obey the Command, and ask not a reason why God injoyns it. It is as necessary to bid the Christian in great afflictions and temptations, to crucifie the word *Quomodo*: How shall I go through this trouble, hold out in that assault! Away

with this *How shall I!* Hath not the great God who is faithful, given thee promises enough to ease thy heart of these needless fears and cares, in that he tells thee, *He will never leave thee nor forsake thee, His grace shall be sufficient for thee? Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* And an hundred more as comfortable assurances from the lip of truth to stand betwixt thee and all harm. Why then dost thou trouble thy self about this improbability and that Mountanous difficulty that Sence and carnal Reason heave up, and interpose to eclipse thy comfort from thy approaching deliverance? *Shut the Windows, and the house will be light,* as the *Jewish* Proverb saith. Judge not by Sence, but by Faith, on an Omnipotent God, and these Bug-bears will not scare thee. *Credere improbabilia vigoris est intellectus, sicut amare damnosa & ignominiosa vigoris est affectus. Parisiensis de fide.* It is the highest Act of our Understanding, to believe those things which seem most improbable; as it is the highest Act of Love, for Christs sake to take pleasure in those things that bring paine and shame with them. For as in the latter, we deny our selves the satisfaction of our carnal desires which goes near to flesh and blood; so in the former we deny our carnal Reasonings, that would be disputing against God's Power and strength.

CHAP. XXX.

The whole Discourse on this piece shut up with an Exhortation to the Ministers, to whom this Sword is especially committed.

TO the *Ministers*, into your hand this Sword of the Word is given in an especial manner: Unto you the Ministerie of it is committed; God hath not left it at random to all; that who will may publickly preach the Gospel. That which is every bodies work, is no bodies: He hath therefore set up a standing Office with Officers in his *Church*, on whom he hath laid this burthen, and from whom he expects an account; 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *He hath committed to us the word of Reconciliation.* As a *Prince* Commissionates this or that man to be his *Embassadour*. *Oh Timothy, keep that which was committed to thy trust*, 1 Tim. 6. 20. See here, and tremble at the charge which is deposited in your hands. You are *Embassadours* from the *great God* to treat with poor sinners concerning their eternal peace upon those Articles which are contained in the Gospel. You are his *Under-workmen* to rear up his *Temple* in the hearts of men, and to lay every stone by the Line and Rule of this Word. *His stewards*, to give his Family their portions in due season, and all your provision to be taken out of this store-house. In a word, you are his *Shepherds* to lead and feed his flock, and that in no other than these green pastures. Now if the peace be not concluded, the Embassadour is sure to be called to an account where the fault lies: If the house be not built, or go to decay; wo to the negligent Workman. If the Family starve, what reckoning will the *Use.*

Steward make? If the sheep wander, or die of the Rot through thy neglect, who shall pay for the loss but the idle shepherd?

Now in order to the discharge of this your publick trust, I shall only point at two duties incumbent on you both with a reference to this Word left in your hands. One to be performed in your *Study*, the other in your *Pulpit*.

SECT. I.

1. IN your study acquaint your selves with the Word of God. That which may passe for diligence in a private Christians reading and search into the Scripture, may be charged as negligence upon the Minister. The study of the Scriptures is not only a part of our general Calling (in common with him) but of our particular also; in which we are to be exercised from one end of the week to the other. The Husbandman doth not more constantly go forth with his Spade and Mattock to performe his day l bour in the field, than the Minister is to go and dig in this Mine of the Scripture. He is not to read a Chapter now and then as his worldly occasions will permit; or steal a little time from his other Scholarly studies to look into the Bible *in transitu*, and bid it Farewell: But it must be his standing exercise, his plodding work; all other must stoop to this. Suppose thou shouldst know what *Plato*, *Aristotle*, (with the rest of the *Princes* of worldly Learning) have writ, and hadst incircled all the *Arts* within thy circumference, but art unskilful in the Word of righteousness; thou wouldst be *Paul's unlearned* person; as unfit to be a Minister, as he that hath read all the body of the *Law* is to be a *Physician*, if ignorant of this *Art*. I do not here intend to nourish the vain conceit of those sons of Ignorance, who think Humane Learning unnecessary for a Ministers furniture. Truly without this, we should soon come to our old *Mumpsimus*, and run into the Barbarism of former Times. I have read of one *Beda*, that disswaded *Francis* the First a *French King* (and that when Learned *Budæus* was present) from his *Princely* resolution of setting up *Professors* of *Languages* in his *University*: Saying, The *Greek Tongue* was the fountain of all *Here-*

sies:

ſies: But the man was found to underſtand not a word of *Greek* himſelf. Indeed few or none will ſpeak againſt Learning, but thoſe that have not ſo much of it, as to make them underſtand its uſe. I dare not bid Miniſters (as ſome Phanaticks have done) burn all their books but the Bible. No; but I would exhort them to preferre it above all their other books, and to direct all their other ſtudies, to furniſh them with Scripture-knowledge; as the Bee that flies over the whole Garden, and brings all the honey ſhe gets from every flower therein into her Hive: So ſhould the Miniſter run over all his other books, and reduce their Notions for his help in this. As the *Iſraelites* offer'd up the Jewels and Ear-Rings borrowed of the *Egyptians* to the ſervice of the *Tabernacle. Benedicta Philoſophorum, ſunt peculia Chriſtianorum.* And certainly there are ſuch Jewels to be borrowed even from them, as may become the ear of a Chriſtian, ſo they be refined and Goſpellized. Thus the *Captive Virgin*, Deut. 21. when her *head was ſhaved*, her *nails pared*, *and her garment changed*, might be taken into an *Iſraelites* boſom. Religion and Learning revived together. The light which *Eraſmus* brought into the *Schools*, helpt *Luthers* labours in the *Church*. But to return to the Exhortation in hand: Oh let us that are Miniſters of the Goſpel, give up our ſelves to the ſtudy of the Word. We are as one well calls us, but *Younger Brethren* to the *Apoſtle*. Miniſterial gifts were left them by Chriſt, as the inheritance by the Father to his Eldeſt Son and Heir. But we muſt work for our Living. They had their knowledge of the Word, as *Jacob* his Veniſion, brought to their hand without hunting; but if we will know the mind of God, we muſt trace it out by our diligence: But ever taking Prayer in our company. This I am ſure was *Paul's* charge to *Timothy*, *Give attendance to reading*, 1 Tim. 4. 13. Follow thy book cloſe, O *Timothy*. And *ver.* 15. *Meditate on theſe things, give thy ſelf wholly to them*: ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι, *in his totus ſis*, be wholly taken up therewith. And mark why, *That thy profiting may appear to all.* That is, that thou mayſt appear to be a growing Preacher to thoſe that hear thee. Oh how ſhall the people grow, if the Miniſter doth not! And how ſhall he grow, if he doth not dayly drink in more than he poures out! That Miniſter muſt needs ſpend upon the ſtock, that hath no comings in from a conſtant Trade in his Study.

dy. If the Nurſe doth not feed, and that more than another, ſhe may ſoon bring her ſelf and child into a Conſumption: As we would not therefore ſee the ſouls that hang on our breaſts, languiſh for want of Milk, or our ſelves faint in our work, let us endeavour our recruits be ſuitable to our expence. Study and pray, pray and ſtudy again. Think not your work is done for all the week, when the Sabbath is paſt. Take a little breath, and return to thy labour; As the ſeeds-man that ſits down at the Lands end to reſt himſelf awhile, and then riſes up to go before his Plough again. We have reaſon to be more choice of our time than others, becauſe it is leſs our own; there is none in thy *Pariſh*, but have a ſhare in it. We are Thieves to our peoples ſouls, when we do not Husband it to their beſt advantage. *All are yours whether Paul, or Appollos, or Cephas*; yours for the ſervice of your faith. Is the Parent bound to Husband his eſtate and time for the proviſion of his children? And ſhould not the ſpiritual Father have as natural an affection to his people? How great a labour this muſts needs be both to mind and body, did they underſtand, they would both more pity, and encourage their Miniſter in their work. God move your hearts to it, whom he hath bleſſed with faithful Labourers: Help them in their ſtudy for you, by eaſing them of their worldly cares for themſelves. Some people may thank themſelves that their proviſion is ſo mean, by being acceſſory to the Miniſters diſtractions in his work, and diverſion from his Calling: For by their oppreſſion or purloyning his Livelihood, they force him in a manner to turn worldling; and the time which he ſhould ſpend in providing bread for their ſouls, is laid out to get bread for his families bodies.

SECT. II.

2. IN the Pulpit uſe no other Sword but this, and handle it faithfully. Remember whoſe Errand thou bringeſt, and deliver it

Firſt, Purely.
Secondly, Freely.

Firſt,

First, Purely: And that in a threefold respect. *Pure* from *Error*: *Pure* from *Passion*: *Pure* from *Levity and Vanity*. 1.

First, *Pure from error.* Think it not enough your Text is Scripture, but let your whole Sermon be also such, I mean agreeable to it. Thou art an Embassadour, and as such bound up in thy instructions. Take heed of venting thy own Dreams and Fancies in God's Name. *Jer.* 23. 28. *He that hath my Word, let him speak it faithfully.* That is, purely, without embasing or mingling it with his own dreams: So he expounds Himself, *What is the Chaff to the Wheat? saith the Lord.* All is Chaff, besides the pure Word of God; and what hath it to do to be blended with it? Such a one may fear lest God from heaven should give him the Lye while he is in the Pulpit. Oh stamp not God's Image on thine own Coin. We live in High-flown times, many people are not content with truths that lie plain in the Scripture; and some to please their wanton Palates, have sublimated their Notions so high, till they have flewn out of the sight of the Scripture, and unawares run themselves with others into dangerous errors. Be well assured it is a Truth, before thou acquaintest thy people with it. If thou wilt play the Mountebank, chuse not the Pulpit for thy Stage. Make not experiments upon the souls of thy people, by delivering what is doubtful, and hath not abode the trial of this Furnace. Better feed thy people with sound Doctrine, though plain meal, than that thou should'st with an Out-landish dish, light on a wild gourd that brings Death into their Pot. 1.

Secondly, *Pure from Passion.* The Pulpit is an unseemly place to vent our discontent and passions in. Beware of this strange fire. The man of God must be gentle and meek, and his words with meekness of wisdom. The Oyl makes the Nail drive without splitting the Board. The *Word* never enters the heart more kindly, than when it falls most gently: *Ride thou prosperously, because of truth and meekness*, Psal. 45. Be as rough to thy peoples sins as thou canst, so thou beest gentle to their souls. Dost thou take the rod of Reproof into thine hand? Let them see that love, not wrath, gives the blow. Nurses are careful that they do not heat their Milk, knowing it will breed ill blood in the child that sucks it. The Word preached comes indeed 2.

deed best from a warm heart, but if there goes a feaverish heat withal, it breeds ill blood in the Hearers thoughts; and prejudice to the person makes him puke up the Milk. God knows I speak not against the Ministers zeal, so it be from above, pure and peaceable. Save all thy heat for God, spend it not in thine own cause. Admirable was *Moses* his meekness in this respect. An high affront he received, and at their hands from whom he least deserved it, *Aaron* and *Miriam*, Numb. 12. 3. but he did not presently retort upon them, it was his own cause, and it was enough God heard it: But when a sin was committed immediately against God, this meek man can be all of a flame, *Who is on God's side? who?* He may take most liberty in reproving his peoples sins against God, that takes least liberty in his own cause, and who hath a grave ready to bury injuries done to himself in.

3 *Thirdly*, *Pure from levity and vanity.* The Word of God is too Sacred a thing, and preaching too Solemn a work to be toyed and played with, as is the usage of some, who make a Sermon nothing but matter of Wit, and to flaunt it forth in a garish discourse. What is this to the business of preaching? Their Sermon is too like a childs Baby, from which if you take the Dressing, the rest is worth nothing: Unpinne this Story, take off that gaudy phrase, and nothing is left in the discourse. If we mean to do good, we must come not only in *Word*, but with *Power*. Satan budges not for a thousand such Squibs and Wit-cracks. Draw thou therefore this Sword out of thine own fine Scabbard, and strike with its naked edge: This you will find the only way to pierce your peoples consciences, and fetch blood of their sins. I do not here speak against the use of those parts which God hath given unto any: Nor against the fitting and laying our discourse so as it may most insinuate into our peoples affections, and steal into their hearts, by the gratefulness it finds with their ear. This is our duty. *Eccles. 12. 9. Because the preacher was wise, he sought to find out acceptable words.* Not rude, loose, and indigested stuff, in a slovenly manner brought forth, lest the sluttery of the Cook should turn the stomacks of the Guests. The *Apothecary* mixeth his potion, so as his Patient may take it down with less regret, if not with some delight: but still he hath a care that he weakens not its purging ope-

operation, by making it over-pleasant to the palate. As they were acceptable words, so upright, *Words of truth*, ver. 10.

Secondly, As purely, so freely. Oh take heed of enslaving the Word of God to thy own lust, or anothers will, though the greatest in thy Parish. *In a steward it is required, that he be faithful*, 1 Cor. 4. 2. Now the preachers faithfulness stands in relation to him that intrusts him. It is very unlikely that a *Steward* in giving out provision, should please all the servants in the house; such Officers have least thanks when they do their work best! He that thinks to please men, goes about an endless and needless work. Man's words will not break thy bones. A wise Physician seeks to cure, not please his Patient. He that chides when he is sick for the bitterness of the potion, will conn thee thanks for it when he is recovered. The *Apostle* passeth by the thoughts of men as a thing inconsiderable, not worthy the interrupting of him in his work. *With me it is a very small thing I should be judged of you*, Verse 3. of the fore-quoted place. As if he had said, It shall be known at the great *Audit*, when my Master comes to reckon with me, whether I have been faithful: And 'tis time enough to have my name righted, when he will vindicate his own. No doubt it was a great temptation to *Micaiah*, when *Ahab*'s Messenger, by cologueing with him, endeavoured to bring him in his message over unto the Kings sense; but mark his Noble Answer, *As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith, that will I speak.* Some think *Micaiah* was that disguised *Prophet* that denounced judgement against *Ahab* for *Benhadad*'s dismission, and that now he was fetcht out of Prison; for the King bids, *Carry him back unto Ammon the Governour*, 1 Kings 22. 26. If so, then *Micaiah* had the advantage by one flattering Sermon to have gotten his liberty, and the King's favour to boot: Yet to the Dungeon he will go again, rather than prostitute the Word to *Ahab*'s lust. Blessed *Paul* was of the same mind, 2 *Tim.* 2. 9. *Wherein* (speaking of the Gospel) *I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound.* As if he had said, They shall never make me enslave that neither in Prison, nor at the Block. No doubt *Paul* might have been free, could he have been content the Word 2.

ſhould have been bound: But he was too faithful to procure his liberty with impriſonment of the Truth by a ſinful ſilence. If ever it was a time of Temptation to Miniſters, and there were need to ſtirre them up in it to keep the Word of Gods Patience, it is in theſe laſt dreggy dayes of the World, of which it is propheſied, *Men ſhall not endure ſound doctrine.* Now therefore to bear witneſs to the Truth, and to make full proof of their Miniſtry in ſuch a perverſe and froward generation, needs more greatneſs of ſpirit than fleſh and blood can help them to. It is no tryal for a Miniſter to ſpeak Truth freely among its friends, but among thoſe that deſpiſe it, and are enraged with the Meſſenger for delivering his Errand. This made the confeſſion of our Lord ſo glorious, 1 *Tim.* 6. 13. It was before *Pontius Pilate*, a bloody enemy againſt Him and the Truth he witneſſed to. Therefore our People may well bear with us when we ſpeak freely in Gods Name; yea, though we come upon their ground, and our Meſſage rifles their conſciences: We have it in our Commiſſion, *Jer.* 6. 27. *I have ſet thee for a Tower and Fortreſs, that thou mayſt know and try their way.* If a Warrant lies but in a Conſtables hand to ſearch your houſe, you cannot be angry with him for doing his Office, becauſe you dare not ſtand betwixt him and the diſpleaſure of his Prince, ſhould he neglect it.

EPHES. 6. 18.

Praying alwayes with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perſeverance and ſupplication for all Saints.

WE have at laſt ſet before you the Chriſtian in his Armour; And now he wants nothing to furniſh him for the Battel, or enable him for the Victory, but the preſence of his General to lead him on, and bring him honourably off again by the Wiſdom of his Conduct. Which that he may obtain, the *Apoſtle* ſets him to prayer, *Praying alwayes, &c.* As if he had ſaid, You have now, Chriſtian, the Armour of God: But take heed thou forgetteſt not to engage the God of this Armour by humble prayer for your aſſiſtance, leſt for all this you be worſted in the fight. He that gives you the Arms, can only teach you to uſe them, and enable you to overcome by their uſe. I am not ignorant that ſome make this of Prayer, a piece of Armour, and to be reckon'd as a part of the Panoply. The truth is, it matters not much in what notion we handle it, whether as a diſtinct piece of Armour, or as a duty and means neceſſarily required to the uſe of our Armour. The latter I ſhall follow. Partly becauſe it hath no piece of material Armour (as the other all have) allotted to it for a reſemblance; as alſo, becauſe by the connexion

it hath (not with the laſt preceding words only, but) with the whole diſcourſe of the Armour, it ſeems to be ſuperadded as a general duty influential upon all the pieces fore-named; and may be read with every piece. Take the Girdle of Truth, praying with all prayer, *&c.* Having on the Breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs, praying with all prayer, *&c.* and the ſame of the reſt. The Chriſtian's Armour will ruſt, except it be furbiſhed and ſcoured with the Oyl of Prayer. What the Key is to the Watch, that Prayer to our graces, it winds them up, and ſets them a going.

In the words Obſerve

1. *Firſt*, The Duty commanded, *Prayer*; with the end for which it is appointed, *viz.* As a help to all his graces, and means to carry on his War againſt Sin and Satan; προσευχόμενοι, *Praying.*

2. *Secondly*, A Directory for Prayer, wherein we are inſtructed how to performe this duty in ſix diſtinct Heads.

Firſt, The Time for Prayer, *Praying alwayes.*

Secondly, The kinds and ſorts of Prayer, *With all prayer and ſupplication.*

Thirdly, The inward principle of prayer from which it muſt flow, *In the Spirit.*

Fourthly, The guard to be ſet about the duty of prayer, *Watching thereunto.*

Fifthly, The unwearied conſtancy to be exerciſed in the duty, *With all perſeverance.*

Sixthly, The comprehenſiveneſs of the duty, or perſons for whom we are to pray, *For all Saints.*

CHAP

CHAP. I.

Prayers usefulness and necessity for the Saints defence in his Warfare shewn, and one Reason *given of the Point.*

WE begin with the first, the Duty in general, together with the connexion it hath with the whole preceding discourse of the Armour, implyed in the participle προσευχόμενοι, *Praying.* That is, furnish your selves with the Armour of God, and joyn prayer to all these graces for your defence against your spiritual enemies.

So that the point deducible from this, is,

SECT. I.

Doct. THat *Prayer is a necessary duty to be performed by the Christian, and used with all other means in his spiritual warfare.* This is the *silver Trumpet*, by the sound of which he is to alarum Heaven, and call in God to his succour, *Numb.* 11. 35. The Saints enemies will not fall, till God riseth; and God stayes to be raised by their prayers, *Psal.* 68. 1. *Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered.* Prayer it is a Catholick duty, and means to be made use of in all our affairs and enterprizes. What Bread and Salt are to our Table, that Prayer is to the Christian in all his undertakings, enjoyments, and temptations. Whatever our meal is, Bread and Salt are set on the Board: And whatever our condition is, Prayer must not be forgot. As we dip all our morsels in Salt, and eat them with bread;

so

ſo we are to act every grace, ſeaſon every enjoyment, mingle every duty, and oppoſe every temptation with Prayer. It hath been the conſtant practice of the Saints in all their dangers and ſtreights, whether from enemies within or without, from ſin, Devils, or Men, to betake themſelves to the Throne of Grace. and draw a line of Prayer about them; accounting this the only ſafe poſture to ſtand in for their defence. When God called *Abraham* from *Haran* into a ſtrange Countrey, where he wandered from place to place amidſt ſtrangers, who could not but have him in ſome ſuſpicion (conſidering the Train and Retinue he had) and this their ſuſpicion create many dangers to this holy man from the Kings round about. Now it is obſervable, what courſe *Abraham* takes for his defence. You ſhall find in his removes from place to place, the memorable thing recorded of him, is, That *he erected an Altar, and called upon the Name of the Lord*, Gen. 12. 7, 8. Ch. 13. ver. 3, 4. This was the breaſt-work he raiſed, and entrenched himſelf in. When he had once by prayer caſt himſelf into the Arms of God for protection, then he made account that he was in his Caſtle. But what need *Abraham* have put himſelf ſo often to this trouble? Had he not the ſecurity of Gods promiſe when he ſet forth, That God would bleſs them that bleſſed him, and curſe them that curſed him? And had he not faith to believe God would be a God of his Word to perform what he had promiſed? We confeſs both. But neither *Gods* promiſe, nor *Abrahams* faith thereon gave any ſuperſedeas to his duty in prayer. The Promiſe is given as a ground of faith, and faith as an encouraging help in prayer; but neither intended to diſcharge us of our duty, and ſave us the labour of that work. And what *Abraham* did, the ſame have all the Saints ever done. The great ſpoyls which they ever got from their enemies, was in the field of Prayer. If *Moſes* ſend *Joſhuah* into the Valley againſt *Amaleck*, himſelf will be on the Mount to ſtorm Heaven by his prayer, while he is engaged in fight with the enemy below; and the Victory 'tis plain was not got by *Joſhuah*'s Sword, ſo much as *Moſes* his prayer. *Jehoſaphat* when he had near a Million of men Muſter'd for the field (beſides his Gariſons that were all well appointed) yet we find him as hard at prayer, as if he had not had a man on his ſide, *We know not what to do, but our eyes are up unto thee*, 2 Chron. 20.

20. Now if these Worthies when they had but flesh and blood, men like themselves to contest with, did yet fetch in their help from heaven, and make such use of Prayers Auxiliary force, and that when other helps were not wanting, lest they should be found under the neglect of an indispensable duty, and prevalent means in order to their defence: How much more doth it behove the Christian, both in point of duty, and prudence, to take the same course in his spiritual Warre against Principalities and Powers! For the Saints graces when best trained and exercised, are without Prayer farre less able to stand against Satan, than they, with their Military preparation, were to repell the force of men like themselves. *Watch and pray* (saith our Saviour) *lest you enter into temptation*, Mat. 26. 41. The not keeping this pass, gave the enemy Satan a fair occasion to come in upon them, For we see, not taking Christs counsel, they were all (though holy men) shamefully foyled. Most of them shifted for themselves by a Cowardly flight (while they left their Lord in his enemies hands:) And he that thought to shew more courage than his Fellows, at last came off with deeper guilt and shame than them all, by denying his Master, who was even then owning him in the face of death, yea his Fathers wrath. And it is observable, that as they were led into temptation through their own neglect of prayer, so they were rescued and led out of it again by Christs prayer, which he mercifully laid in before-hand for them, *Luke* 22. 32. *I have prayed, that thy faith fail not.* But that which above all commends this duty to us, is Christs own practice, who besides his constant exercise in it, did upon any great undertaking (wherein he was to meet opposition from Satan and his instruments) much more abound in it. At his *Baptism*, being now to enter the stage of his *Publick Ministry*, and to make his way thereunto through the fierce and furious assaults of Satan (with whom he was to grapple as it were hand to hand after his forty dayes solitude) we find him at prayer, *Luke* 3. 21. which prayer had a present Answer, heaven opening, and the Spirit descending on him, with this voice, saying, *Thou art my well-beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased*, Vers. 22. And now Christ marcheth forth undauntedly to meet his enemy, who waited for him in the Wilderness. *Again*, When he intended to Commission his *Apostles*, and send them forth

forth to preach the Gospel, which he knew would bring the Lyon fell and mad out of his Den, as also derive the worlds wrath upon those his Messengers. He first sets his Disciples on praying, *Mat.* 9. 38. and then spends the whole night himself in the same work before their Mission, *Luke* 6. 12. But above all, when he was to fight his last Battel with the Prince of this World, and also conflict with the wrath of his Father now Arm'd against him, and ready to be poured upon him for mans sin (whose cause he had espoused) on the success of which great undertaking, depended the saving or losing his Mediatory Kingdom. O how then did he bestirre himself in prayer! It is said, *He prayed more earnestly.* As a Wrestler that streins every vein in his body; so He put forth his whole might, *with strong cryes and tears to him that was able to save him from death*, Heb. 5. 7. and was heard, so that he won the field, though himself slain upon the place; The spoyls of which glorious Victory believers do now divide, and shall enjoy to all eternity. And what is the English of all this, but to shew us both the necessity, and prevalency of Prayer? Without this, no victory to be had, though we have our Armour, but this with that will make us Conquerors over all.

SECT. II.

1. NOW to proceed and shew why Prayer is so necessary a means with our other Armour for our defence.

The first Reason is taken from the co-ordination of this duty with all other means for the Christians defence, and that by divine appointment. He that bids us *take the girdle of truth, breastplate of righteousness, &c.* commands also not to neglect this duty. Now what God joyns, we must not sever. The efficacy of co-ordinate means lies in their conjunction. The force of an Army consists not in this Troop, or that one Regiment, but in all the parts in a Body. And if any single Troop or Company shall presume to fight the enemy alone, what can they expect but to be routed by the enemy, and punisht by their General also? Let not any say, they use this means and that; if any one be willingly neglected, the

the golden chain of obedience is broke: and *Bonum non nisi ex integris.* As to a good Action there is required a concurrence of all the several ingredients and causes: so to make a good Christian, there is required a conscientious care to use all appointed means: He must follow the Lord fully, not make here a Balk, and there a Furrow. It is not the least of Satans policy to get between one duty and another, that the man may not unite his forces, and be uniform in his endeavour. Few so bad as to use no means, and not many so faithful to God and themselves as conscientiously to use all. One, he pretends to sincerity, and dares appeal to God that he means well, and his heart is good; but for the Breastplate of Righteousness it is too heavy and cumbersome for him to wear. Another seems very just and righteous, so that he would not wrong his neighbour, no not of one penny to gain many pounds. But as for faith in Christ, this he never looks after. A third boasts of his faith and hope, as if he did not doubt of his salvation: But as for the Word of God that should beget and encrease it, he cares not how seldom he looks on it at home, or hears it in the publick. And a fourth, he hath this to say for himself, That he is a constant hearer, his seat at Church is seldom found empty, and at home the Bible is often in his hands: But as for Prayer, his Closset, could it speak, would bear witness against him, that he seldom or never performs it. This half-doing will prove many a souls whole undoing. *Samuel* ask'd *Jesse, Are here all my Children?* though but a strippling wanting, he must be sent for, before he'l sit down: So may I say to many that are very busie and forward in some particular duties and means, Is here all that God hath given thee in charge? if but one be wanting, Gods blessing will be wanting also: And as that son was wanting of *Jesses*, which God did intend to set the Crown upon; so that duty and means which is most neglected, we have cause to think is the means which God would especially Crown with his Blessing upon our faithful endeavour.

CHAP. II.

The influence Prayer hath on all the graces of a Saint shewn: And is the second Reason of the Point.

2. THe second is taken from the influence that Prayer hath upon all our graces: And that in a double respect. It will help to evidence the truth of grace, and also advance its growth.

SECT. I.

1. THis duty frequently and spiritually perform'd will be a means to evidence the truth of our graces. And this is of no small importance to the Christian, when he hath to do with the Tempter; for that which he mainly drives at, is to bring the Christian into a suspicion of himself, as to the work of grace in him, thereby to over-turn the very foundation of his hope, and put him to a stand in his endeavours. He indeed will have little list to go on, that fears he is not in his right way. I have heard that Politicians can make use of a State-lye (though the credit of it lasts but a little while) for great advantage to their designs. And he that learns them this Art, makes much more use of it himself to further his designs against the Christian. Because he could not keep Christ in the Grave, therefore he raiseth a lye, to hinder the belief of his Resurrection in the World. And when he cannot hinder the production of grace, he mis-reports the work to the Christian, as if all were but a cheat put upon him by his own deceitful heart, which the poor creature is prone enough (God knows)

knows) to believe, and so though the fear be false and groundless; yet being believed, produceth as sad a confusion to his thoughts, and distress to his spirit, as if it were true. *Jacob* could not have mourned more if *Joseph* had indeed been slain, than he did when there was no such matter: Nor could a wicked wretch easily endure more terrour and horrour, than some precious Saints have felt, for the time that Satans false report (slandering the truth of their grace) hath found credit with them.

Now in Prayer the Christian stands at great advantage to find out the truth of his state, and that upon a double account.

First, God doth commonly take this season, when his People are pouring out their souls to him, to open his heart to them, and to give his testimony both to their persons and graces. God hath his sealing houres, in which his Spirit comes and bears witness to his Childrens state and grace: And this of Prayer is a principal one. Where was it that God so marvellously dignified, and if I may so say, Knighted *Jacob* with that new Title of Honour, *Thou shalt be called Israel*, but in the field of Prayer? What was the happy hour in which the *Angel* knockt at *Daniels door* to let him know how God loved him? was it not when he was knocking at Heaven-Door by his prayer? *Dan.* 10. 23. *At the beginning of thy supplications the Commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee, for thou art greatly beloved.* When got the Woman of *Canaan* the sight of her faith, not only that it was true, but also strong? *O Woman, great is thy faith!* but when her heart was carried forth so vehemently in prayer? Yea *Christ* himself heard that miraculous voice from heaven, *This is my beloved Son*, when he was lifting up His in Prayer to heaven, *Luke* 3.21. 1.

Secondly, The duty of prayer affords a demonstrative Argument for the truth of that souls grace which spiritually performs it. The Spirit of God when he testifies to the truth of a Saints grace, useth to joyn issue with the Saints own spirit, *Rom.* 8. 16. *The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit.* Now the testimony which the Christians own spirit gives for him, is taken from those vital Acts of the new creature that operate in him: such as sincerity, godly sorrow for sin, love of holiness, and other of 2.

this nature are. Now no way do these and other graces more sensibly discover themselves to the Christians view, than in Prayer. Here sincerity shews it self in the Christians plain-heartedness to confess all his sins *freely* without *extorting*, and *nakedly* without *extenuation* or reservation; when there is no false box in the Cabinet of the soul to lock up a darling sin in. Holy *David Psal.* 32. having *ver.* 1. pronounced him *blessed that had no sin imputed to him, and in whose spirit there is no guile:* Verse 5. gives this instance of his own sincerity, that he *acknowledged his sin, and did not hide his iniquity:* As also how well he sped thereby, *And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Again,* Here doth the Christian give vent to his heart, aking with inward grief for sin. Prayer is the Channel into which godly sorrow poures forth it self, and runs down in brinish tears, while the Christian is accusing himself of, and judging himself for his abhominations with deep shame and self-abhorrency. *In a word,* Here the Souls love to holiness flames forth in his fervent vehement desires and requests for grace that can bear no denial, but even breaks for the longing it hath to it. Thus we see a spirit of prayer is both an Argument of true grace, and a means to draw out that grace into Act, whereby its truth may be the better exposed to view. *A Spirit of grace and of supplication*, are both joyn'd together, *Zech.* 12. 10. the later doth indicate the former. What is prayer, but the breathing forth of that grace which is breathed into the soul by the Holy Spirit? When God breathed into man the breath of life, he became a living soul: So when God breaths into the creature the breath of spiritual life, it becomes a praying soul: *Behold he prayeth*, saith *God* of *Paul* to *Ananias*, Acts 9. 11. As if he had said, Be not afraid of him, he is an honest soul, thou mayst trust him, for he prayes. Praying is the same to the new creature, as crying is to the natural. The Child is not learned by Art or Example to cry, but instructed by Nature; it comes into the world crying. Praying is not a Lesson got by Forms and Rules of Art, but flowing from principles of new life it self.

Sect. II.

AS 'tis a means to evidence, so to encrease grace. The praying Christian is the Thriving Christian: whereas he that is infrequent, or slothful in praying, is a Waster. He is like one that lives at great expence, and drives little or no Trade to bring wherewithal to maintain it. 2.

Now prayer helps towards the encrease and growth of grace, these two wayes.

First, As it draws the habits of grace into Act, and exercises them. Now as exercise brings a double benefit to the body, so this to the soul. 1.

First, Exercise doth help to digest or breathe forth those humors that clog the spirits. One that stirs little, we see, grows pursie, and is soon chok'd up with flegme, which exercise clears the body of. Prayer is the Saints Exercise-field, where his Graces are breathed; 'tis as the Wind to the Aire to sweep the Soul; as Bellows to the fire, which clears the coals of those ashes that smother them. The Christian, while in this world, lives but in an unwholesome Climate, one while the delights of it deaden and dull his love to Christ, another while the troubles he meets in it damps his faith on the promise: How now should the poor Christian get out of these his distempers, had he not a Throne of Grace to resort to, where if once his soul be in a melting frame, he (like one laid in a kindly sweat) soon breathes out the malignity of his disease, and comes into his right temper again? how oft do we find the holy *Prophet* when he first kneels down to pray, full of fears and doubts, who yet before he and the Duty part, grows into a sweet familiarity with God, and repose in his own spirit? *Psal.* 13. 1. he begins his prayer, as if it were come to that pass that he thought God would never give him a kind look more; *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever?* But by that time he hath exercised himself a little in duty, his distemper wears off, the mists scatter, and his faith breaks out as the Sun in its strength, *vers.* 5. *I have trusted in thy mercy, my heart shall rejoyce in thy salvation, I will sing unto the Lord.* Thus his faith lays the cloth, expecting a feast ere long to be set on; he that even 1.

now

now queſtion'd whether he ſhould ever hear good news from heaven, is ſo ſtrong in faith, as to make himſelf merry with the hopes of that mercy, which he is aſſured will come at laſt. *Abraham* began with *fifty*, but his faith got ground on God every ſtep, till he brought down the price of their lives to *ten*.

2. Secondly, Exerciſe whets the appetite to that food which muſt be taken before ſtrength can be got; and *cauſa cauſæ eſt cauſa cauſati*. The Hone that ſets an edge on the Husbandman's Sythe, helps him to mowe the graſſe. None comes ſo ſharp ſet to the Word (which is the Saints food to ſtrengthen his grace) as the Chriſtian that takes Prayer in his way to the Ordinance. The ſtronger natural heat is, the better ſtomack the man hath to his meat; Love in the ſoul is what natural heat is in the body, the more the ſoul loves the Word, the more craving it is after it. Now as Exerciſe ſtirs up the natural heat of the body, ſo Prayer excites this ſpiritual heat of love in the Saints boſome to the Word. *Cornelius* is an excellent inſtance for it; we find him hard at prayer in his houſe, when behold a viſion that bids him ſend for *Peter* who ſhould preach the Goſpel to him, a happy reward for his Devotion! Now ſee what a ſharp appetite this praying Soul hath to the Word, he upon this preſently poſts away meſſengers for *Peter*, and before he comes, gathers an Aſſembly together (no doubt all of his friends that he could get) there he ſits with a longing heart waiting for the Preacher: As ſoon as ever he ſees his face, he falls down at his feet, receiving him with that reverence and reſpect as if he had been an *Angel* dropt out of Heaven; preſently he ſets *Peter* to work, though ſome may think he paſſed good manners in putting him to labour after ſo long a journey, before he had refreſhed him with ſome collation or other; but the good man was ſo hungry to hear the meſſage he brought, that he could not well pacifie his ſoul to ſtay any longer, and like a man truly hunger-bit he is ready to catch at any truth (though never ſo bitter) which ſhall be ſet before him. *Act.* 10. 33. *Now therefore are we all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.* And when the Sermon is done, ſo favory and ſweet was the meal, that he is loth to think of parting with *Peter* before he gets more from him, and therefore beſeeches him to ſtay ſome days with him; one Sermon did but make his teeth water for another. O how unlike are they who come reeking out of the world

to

to a Sermon, to *Cornelius* that riseth from Prayer to wait for the Preacher?

SECT. III.

SEcondly, Prayer helps our Graces, as it sets the soul nigh to God; in prayer we are said *to draw near to God, Jam.* 4. 8. *To come before his presence, Psal.* 110. In it *we have access to the Father, Eph.* 2. As one that brings a Petition to a *Prince*, is call'd into his Presence-chamber; one of the neareſt approaches to God which the Creature is capable of on this side Heaven, which was signified by the *Incense-altar*, that stood so high even within the Vail; Prayer 'tis call'd, *The Throne of Grace*, we come in prayer to the Throne of God, and put our Petition into the very hand of God, as he sits on his Throne in all his Royalty, now as prayer is so near an approach to God, it hath a double influence into the grouth of the Saints Grace. 2.

First, By this near access to God, the Soul is put the more into an holy awe and fear of that pure and piercing Eye of God, which he sees looking on him; 'tis true, God is ever near us, pray or not pray, we cannot rid our selves of his presence; but never hath the soul such apprehensions of his presence, as when it is set before God in prayer. Now the soul speaks to God as it were mouth to mouth; and considering how holy that Majesty is with whom he hath to do in prayer, he must needs reverence and tremble before him. Now the natural issue of this holy fear, what can it be but a care to approve it self to God? And this care cherishes every grace; they are carried in its Arms, as the child in its Nurses; it keeps the Girdle of Truth buckled close about his loyns. Oh, saith the Soul, I must either leave praying, or leave doubling and juggling with God by Hypocrisie! It will strengthen the breast-plate of holiness; 'tis not possible that a Christian should walk loosely all day, and be free and familiar with God at night. He that waits on the person of a Prince, will be careful to carry nothing about him, that should be offensive to his Eye, yea afraid left any thing should come to his Ear, that should bring him under a cloud in his Princes thoughts, and remove him from 1.

from his place about him; and Courtiers have those that will be alwayes undermining them if they can: And the Christian wants not such an Adversary, for *Satan* is at his right hand at every miscarriage to accuse him unto God, saying, This is your favourite, though he be so devout in prayer, he can do this or that, when the duty is over; and therefore if any in the world have a tye upon them more than others to walk exactly, 'tis they that minister before the Lord in this duty. Princes are more curious of their Attendants, than of others at further distance from them. When *David* shew'd some distraction of mind before *King Achish*, he bids *Away with him, have I need of mad-men that you bring such a one into my presence.* And does a poor mortal man that sits on a Throne of Dust only he put up, and raised a little above his fellows, take such State on him as not to bear the discomposure of any before him? How much less will the great God (though he winck for a time at the foul sins of others) brook any unholy behaviour in those that wait so nigh upon him! This, no doubt, made *Cain* run so fast from the presence of God, because he knew that it was no standing so nigh God with such an unholy heart as he carried in his bosome.

2. *Secondly*, By the souls near access to God in prayer, it receives sweet influences of grace from God. All grace comes from the God of grace; not only the first seed of grace, but its growth and increment; and God usually sheds forth his grace in a way of communion with his people. Now by Prayer the Christian is led into most intimate communion with God, and from communion follows communication. As the warmth the Chicken finds by sitting under the Hens wings cherisheth it; so are the Saints graces enlivened and strengthened by the sweet influences they receive from this close communion with God. The Christian is compared to a Tree, *Psa.* 1. And those Trees flourish most, and bear sweetest fruit, which stand most in the Sun. The praying Christian is (as they say of the *Rhodians*) *in sole positus*: He stands nigh to God, and hath God nigh to him in all that he calls upon him for. And therefore you may expect his fruit to be sweet and ripe, when another that stands as it were in the shade, and at a distance from God (through neglect of, or infrequency in this duty) will have little fruit found on his branches, and that but green and soure. *Psalm* 92. 13, 14. *Those that be planted in the House*

House of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God: They shall bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing.

CHAP. III.

Prayers prevalency with God. The third Reason given of the point.

THE third Reason why the Christian should joyn prayer to all other means, is taken from the great prevalency prayer hath with God. He will do no great matter for a Saint without prayer, and nothing is too great for him to do at his request. Prayer like *Jonathans bow* (when duely qualified as to the person and act) never returns empty. Never was faithful prayer lost at Sea. No Merchant Trades with such certainty, as the praying Saint. Some prayers indeed have a longer Voyage than others; but then they come with the richer Lading at last into the Port. In Trading, he gets most by his commodity that can forbear his money longest. So does the Christian that can with most patience stay for a return of his prayer: such a soul shall never be ashamed of his waiting. The promise is as an *assuring office* to secure him his adventure, 1 *John* 3. 22. O who can express the powerful Oratory of a Believers prayer! *Vocula Pater formaliter dicta in corde, est eloquentia, quam Demosthenes, Cicero & eloquentissimi in mundo nunquam possunt exprimere.* Luther. This little word *Father*, lisped forth in prayer by a child of God, exceeds the eloquence of *Demosthenes, Cicero*, and all other so famed Oratours in the World. We read of *taking hea-*

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ven by force, Mat. 11. 12. If ever this may be said to be done, it is in prayer. *Cœlum tundimus & misericordiam extorquemus*, saith *Tertul.* We knock at Heaven, and the merciful heart of God flies open, which we bring away with us. And in the same *Apology* he speaks of Christians, how they went to pray, *as an Army doth to besiege a Town, and take it by storme. Coimus in cœtum & congregationem, ut ad Deum quasi manu-factâ precationibus ambiamus orantes*; and then addes, *Hæc vis Deo grata est.* This holy violence we offer to God in prayer, is very pleasing to him. Surely, if it were not, he would neither help the Christian so in the work, nor reward him for it when it is done. Whereas he doth both. He helpt *Jacob* to overcome; *Hosea* 12. 3. *By his strength he had power with God.* That is, not by his own, but the strength he had from God. And then he puts honour upon him for the Victory, *Gen.* 32. 28. *Thy name shall not be called Jacob, but Israel, for as a Prince thou hast power with God and men, and hast prevailed.* It were easie here to expatiate into a large History of the great Exploits which Prayer is Renowned for in Holy Writ. This is the *Key* that hath *open'd and again shut heaven.* It hath *vanquisht mighty Armies*, and unlocked such *Secrets*, as passed the skill of the very Devil himself to find out. It hath strangled *desperate plots* in the very womb wherein they were conceived; and made those Engines of cruelty prepared against the Saints, recoyl upon the Inventors of them; so that they have inherited the Gallows which they did set up for others. At the knock of Prayer *Prison-doors* have open'd, the Grave hath *delivered up its dead*, and the Seas *Leviathan* not able to digest his prey, hath been made to vomit it up again. It hath stopt the *Suns Charriot* in the Heavens, yea made it *to go back.* And that which surpasseth all, it hath *taken hold of the Almighty*, when on his full march against persons and people, and hath put him to a merciful retreat. Indeed by the power prayer hath with God, it comes to prevail over all the rest. He that hath a Key to Gods heart, cannot be shut out, or stopt at the creatures door. Now prayer moves God and overcomes him, not by causing any change in the Divine Will, and making God to take up new thoughts of doing that for his people which he did not before intend. No, God is immutable, and what good he doth in time for his people, he purposed before any

Jam. 5. 17. *Isa.* 37. Dan. 2. 18. 2 Sam. 15. 31. Esth. 4. 16. Acts 12. 5. John 11. 41. Jonah 2. 2. Josh. 10. 12, 14. 2 Kings 20. 10. *Psa.* 106. 23. Ezek. 22. 30.

any time was. But prayer is said to more than overcome God, because He then gives, what from eternity he purposed to give upon their praying to him. For when God Decreed what he would do for his Saints, he also purposed that they should pray for the same. *Yet will I be enquired of by the House of Israel to do it for them*, Ezek. 36. 37. Prayers Midwifry shall be used to deliver the mercies God purposeth and promiseth. *Hezekiah* understood this when he calls the *Prophet* to the Churches Labour, and bids, *Because the children* (that is, Deliverance) *stuck in her birth, that he should therefore lift up a prayer*, Isa. 37. 4. And when *David* had found the full reckoning of the promise (how long it had to go with the deliverance promised for their return from Captivity) perceiving it hastned, he therefore falls hard to prayer, knowing Gods purpose to give, doth not discharge us from our duty to *ask*, Dan. 9. 3.

CHAP. IV.

Wherein this Question is Answered, Why God requires prayer for that which He hath before promised to give?

Quest. *BUT why doth God impose this upon the Saints, that they should pray for what he hath purposed and promised to give?*

Answ. 1. That they may be conformable to Christ. The design of God is to make every Saint like Christ: This was resolved from eternity, *Rom.* 8. 29. Now as the Limner looks on the person whose picture he would take, and drawes his lines to answer him with the neareſt simili-

tude that may be; so doth God look on Christ as the Architype to which he will conform the Saint, in suffering, in grace, and in glory: yet so, that Christ hath the preheminence in all. Every Saint must suffer, because Christ suffer'd: Christ must not have a delicate body under a crucified head. Yet never any suffer'd, or could, what he endured. Christ is holy, and therefore so shall every Saint be, but in an inferiour degree. An Image cut in clay, cannot be so exact as that which is engraved on gold. Now, as in other things, so in this, our conformity to Christ appears; that as the promises made to him were performed upon his prayer to his Father; so promises made to his Saints, are given to them in the same way of prayer. *Ask of me* (saith God to his Son) *and I will give thee*, Ps. 2. And the *Apostle* tells us, *Ye have not, because ye ask not.* God had promised support to Christ in all his conflicts; *Isa.* 42. 1. *Behold my servant whom I uphold.* Yet he prayes *with strong cries and tears*, when his feet stood within the shadow of death. A seed is promised to him, and Victory over his enemies: yet for both these he is at prayer now in Heaven. *Christ* towards us acts as a *King*; but towards his Father as a *Priest.* All he speaks to God is on his knee by prayer and intercession. In like manner the *Saints*; The promise makes them *Kings* over their lusts, Conquerors over their enemies; but it makes them *Priests* towards God, by prayer humbly to sue out those great things given in the promise.

2. That God may give the good things of the promise with safety to his Honour. Secure God but his glory, and the Saint may have what he will. The very life of God is bound up in his glory. The Creatures honour is not intrinsecal to his being. A Prince is a man, when his Crown and Kingdom are gone; but God cannot be a God, except he be glorious; neither can he be glorious, unless he be holy, just, merciful, and faithful, *&c.* Now that this his glory may be seen and display'd, is the great end he propounds both in making and ordering of the World, *Prov.* 16. 4. *He made all things for himself.* If there were any one occurrence in the World, which could be no way reducible to the glory of God, it would make the being of a Deity to be questioned. But the Al-wise God hath so made, and doth so order all his Creatures with their actions, that the manifestation of his

his glory is the result of all. Indeed he forceth it from some, and takes it by distress; as *Princes* do their Taxes from disobedient Subjects. Thus the very *wrath of his enemies shall praise him*, Psal. 76. 10. But he expects the Saints should be active instruments to glorifie him, and like Loyal Loving Subjects, pay him the Tribute of his praise freely, with acclamations of joy and gratitude: Which that they may do, he issueth out his mercies in such a way, as may best suit with this their duty. And that is to give the good things he hath purposed and promised to them upon their humble address in prayer to him.

Now two wayes the glory of God is secured by this means.

First, The Sains in the very duty of prayer (when he performs it in a qualified manner) doth highly glorifie God. Prayer as it is *medium gratiæ*, a Channel of grace, for the conveighing and deriving blessings from God the fountain into the Cistern of our bosomes: So it is *medium cultus*, a means of worship, whereby we are to do our homage to God, and give him the glory of his Deity. By this we give him the *glory of his power*. Prayer is an humble appeal from our impotency to Gods Omnipotence. None begs that at anothers door, which he can pleasure himself with at home. And if we thought not God able, we would go to another, not to him. We give him *the glory of his Soveraignty* and Dominion, and acknowledge that he is not only able to procure for us what we ask, but can give us a right to, and the blessing of what he gives. Therefore Christ closeth his prayer with, *Thine is the Kingdom, Power, and Glory, &c.* as a reason why we direct our prayers to God: Because He alone is the *Soveraign Lord* that can invest us in, and give us Title to any enjoyment. So that it is high Treason against the Crown and Dignity of God, when we either attempt to possess our selves of any enjoyment without praying to him; or when we pray Religiously to any other besides him. By the *first* we usurp his Soveraignty our selves, in their language, *Jer.* 2. 31. *We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee.* And by the *second* we give away his Kingdom and Soveraignty to another. This was the Devils drift when he would have had Christ fall down and worship him; that thereby he might acknowledge him to have the Rule of the World. *Again*, by prayer we give him *the glo-* 1.

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ry of his free-mercy. Men demand a debt, but beg an Alms. When we pray, we renounce merit. See them oppoſed, *Job* 9. 15. *Whom though I were righteous, yet would I not anſwer; but I would make ſupplication to my Judge.* We might ſhew the ſame in all the other Attributes: But this taſte from a few may ſuffice. And as God eſſentially conſidered, receives by prayer an acknowledgement of his Deity: So every *Perſon* in the *Sacred Trinity*, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, in prayer are honoured. By directing our prayers to *God* the *Father*, we honour him as the ſource and fountain of all grace and mercy. We honour the *Son*, in preſenting our prayers in his Name to the Father, thereby acknowledging him the Purchaſer of the mercies we beg And the *Holy Ghoſt* he receives the honour of that aſſiſtance which we acknowledge to receive from him for the duty of prayer. For as we pray *to* the *Father through* the *Son*, ſo by the *help* of the *Spirit*.

2. *Secondly*, As God is honour'd in the very act and exerciſe of this duty duely qualified; ſo by it the Chriſtian is deeply engaged, and alſo ſweetly diſpos'd to praiſe God for, and glorifie him with the mercies he obtains by prayer.

Firſt, Prayer engageth to this. In prayer we do not only beg mercy of God, but vow praiſe to God for the mercies we beg. Prayers are called *vows*, Pſal. 61. 5. *O God, thou haſt heard my vows.* That is, my prayers, in which I ſolemnly vowed praiſe for the deliverance I begg'd. It is no prayer, where no vow is included. We muſt not think to bind God, and leave our ſelves free. God ties himſelf in the promiſe to help us; but the condition of the Obligation on our part, is, that we will glorifie him. And upon no other terms doth God give us leave to ask any mercy at his hands. *Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie me*, Pſalm 50. 15. Now, what a ſtrong tie doth this lay upon the praying Chriſtians heart, to uſe the mercies he receives, holily, and to wear with thankfulneſs what he winnes by prayer! The Chriſtian who would be loth to be taken in a lye to man, will much more fear to be found a lyar to God: *Surely they are my people* (ſaith *God*) *Children that will not lye, ſo he was their Saviour*, Iſaiah 63. 8.

Secondly,

Secondly, Prayer is a means to diſpoſe the heart to praiſe. Prayer and praiſe, like the *Symbolical* qualities in the *Elements*, are ſoon reſolved each into the other. When *David* begins a Pſalm with prayer, he commonly ends it with praiſe: From whence things have their Original, thither they return: From the Sea the River-Water comes, and no Mountains can hinder, but back again to the Sea it will go. That Spirit which leads the ſoul out of its ſelf to God for ſupply, will direct it to the ſame God with his praiſe. We do not uſe to borrow money of one man, and pay it to another. If God hath been *thy ſtrength*, ſurely thou wilt make him *thy ſong*. The Thief comes not to thank a man for what he ſteals out of his Yard. And I as little wonder that they do not glorifie God for or with his mercies, who did not ask his leave by prayer for them What men do by themſelves, they aſcribe to themſelves. Mercies ill got, are commonly as ill ſpent: becauſe they are not ſanctified to them, and ſo become fuel to feed their luſts. Hence it is, the more enjoyments they have, the more proud and unthankful they are. But by prayer the Chriſtians enjoyments are ſanctified, and the flatulency of them which puffs up others into pride, is corrected; and the ſame mercies received by prayer, become nouriſhment to the Saints graces, that putrifie and turn to noyſome luſts in the prayerleſs ſinner.

Thirdly, God will have his people pray for what he hath purpoſed and promiſed, to ſhew the great delight he takes in their prayers. As a father, though he can ſend to his ſon (who lives abroad) the money he hath promiſed for his maintenance, yet lets him not have it, except he comes over at ſet times for it. And why? Not to trouble his ſon, but delight himſelf in his ſons company. God takes ſuch content in the company of his praying Saints, that to prevent all ſtrangeneſs on their part, he orders it ſo, that they cannot neglect a duty, but they ſhall loſe ſomething by it. *Ye have not, becauſe you ask not.* And the more they abound in prayer, the more they ſhall with bleſſings. The oftner *Joaſh* had *ſmote upon the ground*, the fuller had his victory over *Syria* been. As the Arrows of prayer are, that we ſhoot to Heaven, ſo will the returns of mercy from thence be. Yet muſt it not be imputed to any lothneſs in God to give, that he makes them pray often and long before the mercy comes, but rather 3.

ther to the content he takes in our prayers; he doth all this on a design to draw out the graces of his Spirit in his Children, the voice and language of which in prayer, makes most sweet melody in the ear of God. The truth is, we are in this too like Musicians playing under our window, they play while the money is thrown out to them, and then their Pipes are put up. And were our wants so supplied by the Answer of one prayer, that we did not suddenly need a new recruit, we would be gone, and God should not hear of us in hast.

CHAP. V.

A sharp reproof to all prayerless souls: With the dismal state that such are in, shewn.

Use 1. A Word to those who live in the total neglect of this duty, that are prayerless creatures; such ruines of mankind there are to be found, who pass their wretched dayes like so many Swine, they never look up to heaven, till God layes them on their back; nor are heard to cry in prayer, till his Knife is at their Throat. What shall I say to these *Gyants*, and sons of the earth, that have renounced their Allegiance to the God of Heaven! These *Kine of Bashan*, who like so many Metamorphos'd *Nebuchadnezzars*, have lost the heart of a man, and live like as very bruits, as the beasts themselves, who while they feed, take no notice of him that cloaths the field with grass for them! Can I hope they will hear man, who will not acknowledge the God of Heaven by praying to him! Surely your case is deplored: What! not pray!

pray! Can you do leſs than by this Homage to own God for your Maker? Or leſs for your own ſouls, than to beg their life of God, whoſe hand of juſtice is lift up against you? Are you reſolv'd thus to throw your ſelves into the Devils mouth, without ſo much as ſtriking one ſtroak for your defence! If God had required a greater matter at your hands than this, the ſalvation of your ſouls would have deſerved it: And will you ſtick at this! God does not put us to the coſt of laying down the price of our Ranſome, no not ſo much as to pay our Priſon-fees; only he bids thee pray, and he will pay: *Their ſouls ſhall live that ſeek the Lord*, Pſal. 69. 32. Oh what ſalt and vinegar will this pour into thy wounds, when in Hell thy conſcience ſhall flie in thy face, and tell thee thou hadſt not been there, if thou wouldſt in time have humbled thy ſoul before God, and ſought his favour in that way which coſt Chriſt his blood to procure; either thou muſt be diſpoſſeſt of this dumb Devil, or undoubtedly it will be thy damnation! And who dies with leſs pity, than that Malefactor, that ſtouts it before the Judge, and will not ſo much as down on his knees, or open his mouth to cry for mercy, though the Judge on purpoſe ſtayes to pronounce the ſentence, and break up the Court, to ſee whether his ſtomack will fall, and his proud ſpirit ſtoop to ask his life at his hands! You know how angry *Pilate* was, when Chriſt was ſilent, *Joh.* 19. 10. *Speakeſt thou not unto me? Knoweſt thou not, that I have power to crucifie thee, and power to releaſe thee?* Though alas, poor creature (as Chriſt told him) he could do nothing for or againſt him; and therefore Chriſt neither feared him, nor ought him ſo much ſervice as to beſtow a word upon him. The Warrant for Chriſts death was ſealed in Heaven, and he with the reſt of Chriſts enraged enemies, were but Gods ſervants to do the Execution according to the determinate counſel of God. But how much more reaſon hath the great God to be provoked by this irreligion, and ſay, Wilt thou not ſpeak to me? Pray to me? Doſt thou not know I have power to ſave or damn? To deliver thee to the tormentor, or keep thee out of his hands? Or doſt thou look that God is bound to ſave thee whether pray or not pray? If he doth (I promiſe you) he ſhall do more for thee than for others; yea, than for his own Son, *who made ſtrong cries and ſupplications to be ſaved by him.* God hath laid the method of ſalvation, and

think not that he will alter it, and so make a blot in the counsel of his Will for thy pleasure: What he hath written, he hath written: and it shall not be reversed: Yea, though others should be so kind as out of pity to thy soul to pray for thee, yet if thou beest thy self a prayerless creature, thou shalt die the death. If they were *Noah*, *Samuel*, and *Daniel*, that stood up to beg thy life, they should not be heard for thee. Proxy prayers in this case will not prevail. And therefore when the *Israelites* came a begging to *Samuel* for his prayers (which good man he easily promised, indeed durst not have forgot them in that, though they had not remembred him of it) mark what Caveat he annexeth, 1 *Sam.* 12. 24. *Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart.* As if he had said, Do not set me to do that for you, which you will not do for your selves; 'Tis not all the interest my prayers have in Heaven will keep the wrath of God from falling on you, if you be wicked and Atheistical: therefore *fear the Lord, and serve him:* That is, pray and obey him. Fear oft denotes the worship of God, *Gen.* 31. *God* is called the *fear of Isaac*; *i. e.* The God whom he fear'd and worshipt: So *Jer.* 10. 7. *Who will not fear thee, thou King of Nations?* That is, worship thee, rather the stocks and stones! Because the worshipping of God results from our reverence and fear we have of him: Christ *was heard in that he feared*, Heb. 5. 7. ἀπὸ τ ἐυλαβείας. That is, his religious fear expressed in those his strong cries, which he groaned forth to God in his Agony. And therefore so long as you are prayerless, you live without the fear of God. And what will not such a wretch dare to do! Even any thing that Satan shall command him, though it be to go to a Wizard. When *Saul* had given over enquiring after God, we hear him by and by knocking at the Devils door, and asking counsel of a *Witch*. Oh! take heed of living so near the Tempter! If Satan might have his wish, surely it would be this, That the creature might live prayerless; for by this he should do the greatest spight possible to God, in that he makes the creature set him at naught in all his Attributes, and have the greatest advantage against the sinner himself. Now he hath thee as sure as the Thief hath the Traveller, when he hath thrown him into a Ditch fast bound, and stopt his mouth, that he cannot cry to others for help. In a word, Thou art free booty for Satan, who

who may now satisfie his lust upon thee. He that prayeth, invites God into his further acquaintance, and soon shall have it: As we see in *Paul*, who had *Ananias* sent from God to him. But he that lives in the neglect of this duty, gives the Devil fuller possession of him. Thou art the man of all others most fit for him to make an Atheist of. I should not wonder that the Devil perswades thee there is no God, who already livest in such defiance against him, as cannot but make the belief of a Deity dreadful to thy thoughts. *Herod* was soon perswaded to cut off *John*'s head, because when he was alive, he so troubled and nettled his Conscience. And 'tis to be feared, thou wilt easily be drawn to attempt the stifling all thoughts of a Deity, from whom thy criminous conscience expects to hear nothing that can please thee: Yea, 'tis probable thou hast too much of the Atheist in thee already, or else thou durst not deny God that part of natural worship, which they that know him least give unto him. I am sure the Scripture lays this Brat of irreligion at the door of *Atheisme*, *Ps.* 14. 1. *The fool* there would fain perswade himself there is no God, and when he hath got so farre the Mastery of his Conscience as to blot God out of his *Creed*, he then soon leaves him out of his *Pater Noster*, ver. 2.

Quest. *But it may be some will ask me, Whether I think that any do, where the Gospel is preached, neglect prayer on this account of Atheism?* Quest.

Answ. Truly I do; and which is more, I think there are worse Atheists to be found under the Meridian light of the Gospel, than in the darkest Nook in *America* (where yet this day never broke) As weeds grow rankest in richest grounds, and fruits ripest in hottest Climates: so do sins grow to the greatest heighth, where the Gospel-Sun climbs highest. *Who is blind but my servant? and blind as the Lords servant*, Isa. 42. 19. Who such *Atheists* as those that have their eyes put out by the light of the Gospel? The poor *Indians* little knowledge of a God is for want of light, which may be cured, when it is brought to them: But if a judiciary *Atheism* (as that in Gospel-times and places commonly is) falls upon a soul for rebelling against the light, this is incurable; here the very visive faculty is perished, and the eye bored out. *Answ.*

CHAP. VI.

An Exhortation to the Saints, that they would abound in this Duty.

Use 2. TO the Saints; Be you provoked to ply this Oare more diligently than ever: If this be neglected, an universal decay of all your graces follows. When the Ports and Havens of a Kingdom are blockt up, that the Merchant cannot go forth, there follows a damp on all the inland Trade, so that an enemy needs not strike a stroak, but only stand still to see them eat up one another. The *Psalmist* tells us of a *stream which makes glad the City of God*, Psalm 46. The promise is this stream, upon which the Saints have all their Livelihood brought up to their very doors; if this be kept open, Satan cannot much distress them, which then is done, when they can send out their prayers on this stream to Heaven; but if once this Trade be stopt, then they are hard put to it. 'Tis observ'd of our Neighbours the *Netherlands*, that whereas other *Nations* use to be made poor by Warre, they have grown rich with it. Because with their Warres they have enlarged their Trade and Traffique abroad. And if thou Christian wouldst thrive by all thy temptations, thou must take the same course; whatever thou dost, starve not thy Trade with Heaven. God hath (to make thee more diligent in this Duty) so ordered things, that all the treasure of the promise is to be conveyed to thee, in this bottom of prayer. This is like the *Merchant ship*, Prov. 30. *It brings thy food from afarre.* If thy mercies were of the growth of thy own Countrey, thou might'st spare a Voyage to Heaven: But alas poor Creature, when thou art

art b eſt laid in, and thy ſtore-houſe fulleſt, if no forreign ſupplies ſhould come unto thee from Heaven, how ſoon wouldſt thou be brought with the poor Widow, to eat thy laſt Cake and die! It w s not her little meal in her Barrel, nor oyle at the bottome of her Cruſe, but Gods bleſſing multiplying them, that made them hold out ſo long: So, not thy preſent grace, ſtrength, or comfort, but Gods feeding theſe with a new Spiring, that thou muſt live upon: Now ceaſe praying, and the Oyle of Grace will ceaſe running: *Ye have not, becauſe you ask not.* And when the ſtore is ſpent, the City muſt yield. As thou wouldſt not therefore fall into Satan's hands, loſe not thy intereſt in God thy beſt Allie, for want of preſerving a good correſpondence with him at the Throne of Grace. Now for the better purſuit of this Exhortation, ſome Counſel would not be amiſſe in order to thy driving this Trade of Prayer more ſucceſſefully. *Satan*, who hath received ſo many ſhameful overthrows by the Saints Prayers, that he trembles at the force of this great Ordinance of Heaven. This is the voice, the mighty voice of God in his Saints which ſhakes thoſe Mountains of Pride, divides the flames of their fiery temptations, and makes them caſt forth their abortive counſels to their ſhame and diſappointment, *Oh Lord, I pray thee turn the counſel of Achitophel into fooliſhneſs,* 2 Sam. 15. 31. This one prayer made both *Achitophel* a fool, and him that ſet him on work alſo, defeating the wiſdome both of man and Devil. Satan hath ſuch an impreſſion of dread upon him (from the remembrance of what he hath ſuffered from the hands of Prayer) that he will turn every ſtone, and try every way to obſtruct thee in it. *What do we?* (ſaid the *Phariſees*) concerning *Chriſt*) *for this man does many Miracles, if we let him alone, the Romans will come, and take away both our Place and Nation.* Satan cannot deny, but great wonders have been wrought by prayer. As the ſpirit of prayer goes up, ſo his kingdom goes down. It is of the *Royal ſeed*, he can no more ſtand before it, than falling *Haman* before riſing *Mordecai*. And therefore ſeeing this is like to do thee ſuch great ſervice againſt him, it behoves thee the more to defend it from his ſtratagems. Becauſe the great Artillery of an Army is ſo uſeful to it, and formidable to the enemy, therefore it hath a ſtrong guard ſet about it. Now

Now Satans ſtratagems againſt prayer, are of three kinds.

Firſt, If he can, he will keep thee from prayer. If that be not feiſible:

Secondly, He will ſtrive to interrupt thee in Prayer. And

Thirdly, If that plot takes not, he will labour to hinder the ſucceſs and return of thy prayer.

CHAP. VII.

Two ſtratagems whereby Satan labours to ſtave the weak Chriſtian from the Duty of Prayer.

1. HIS firſt deſign upon thee, will be to keep thee from Prayer. To effect which, he wants not his ſtratagems, many Objections that he will ſtart, and diſcouragements he will throw in thy way to this duty, hoping that if thou ſtumbleſt not at one, yet he may make thee fall by another, and be ſick of thy enterprize before thou ſetteſt upon it. And which is worſt, thou wilt find a party in thy own boſome too ready to liſten to what he ſaith, yea to take up his Arguments and maintain the diſpute againſt thy engaging in this work. We ſhall pick a few among many, and put an Anſwer into thy mouth againſt he comes.

SECT.

SECT. I.

WHat! thou pray! if thou doſt, thou wilt but play the Hypocrite, and better not pray at all, than never the better! Nay, poſſibly thy own miſgiving heart may ſuggeſt the ſame, or at leaſt ſo farre credit his charge, as to make thee waver in thy thoughts what thou ſhouldſt do, pray or not. 1. *Stratagem* 1.

Now to Arm thee againſt this, Conſider, The defenſitive againſt it.

Firſt, Thou art *but afraid* thou ſhouldſt play the *Hypocrite*, if pray: but thou wilt certainly prove thy ſelf an *Atheiſt*, if thou doſt not; and that is it which he would have. I hope thou art wiſer than to neglect a known duty upon a jealouſie thou haſt of miſcarrying in it; to lie down in a known ſin (yea, ſo broad a one as brands him for an Atheiſt that continues in it) for fear of meeting a Lyon (and may be but a Bugbear) in the way of thy obedience to an indiſpenſable command.

Secondly, Thou art in the leſs danger of playing the Hypocrite, becauſe of thy fear. Some bodily diſeaſes indeed are catcht with a fear and fancy. He is moſt like to have the plague or Pox, that fears moſt he ſhall have them; but none are ſo ſafe from ſin, as they that fear the falling into it moſt. The truth is, I would deſire no better Argument to prove thee ſincere than this, To fear thy Hypocriſie. Believe it, if this be the great trouble of thy ſoul, the Devil hath more reaſon to fear thy ſincerity, than thou thy hypocriſie: And in all likelihood this it is, that makes him to ſcare thee from Prayer; becauſe thou wouldſt ſcare him ſo much by thy praying. If thou wert an Hypocrite (as he pretends) himſelf would invite thee to it, yea make a Lane for thee, rather than that thou ſhouldſt not come to the work; and when thou art riſen from thy knees, he would thank thee for thy pains, becauſe he knows God would not. The Hypocrite does him more ſervice than God. You do not believe ſure, that the Devil was any great enemy to *Jezebels* faſting, nay I doubt not, but he put it into her head, that ſhe might thereby mock both God and man. Her faſt was the Devils feaſt. 2.

But

3 But *Thirdly*, If thou findeſt more cauſe to fear thy playing the Hypocrite, than I who am a ſtranger to thy heart have reaſon to do (Who indeed can know ſo well how thy own heart beats as thy ſelf?) I ſay, If thou feareſt this be the ſin which is moſt likely to make a breach upon thee in thy Duty, do as *Moſes*, who ſlew the *Egyptian* to reſcue the *Iſraelite*: deſtroy the ſin, that thou mayſt reſcue thy ſoul from the neglect of a Duty. Thou haſt a very fair advantage by the intelligence God graciouſly gives thee, whence thy danger is moſt likely to come, of falling on thy enemy, and taking the fuller revenge on him before thou fetſt about the work of Prayer. Get but thy heart into a hatred of this odious ſin, and fixed reſolution againſt it, and with Gods Bleſſing it ſhall neither be able to hurt thee, nor hinder thy prayer from finding welcome with God.

SECT. II.

Strat. 2. OH but, ſaith Satan, thou haſt no gifts for prayer, leave that for them that can perform this duty after a better faſhion.

The defenſitive. What meaneſt thou by gifts? If a rowling flowing tongue, which ſome have, whereby they are able on a ſudden with a long continued diſcourſe, to run over all the Heads of Prayer in a clear method, and cloath every Petition with apt and moving expreſſions; we will ſuppoſe thou haſt not this gift; but God forbid, that the want of this ſhould keep thee from praying, or make thee go the leſs comfortably to the duty. The want of theſe, ſhew only thou haſt not ſo good a head, but doth not the leaſt hinder thy heart to be as gracious as theirs: And better of the two, that the defect ſhould be found in thy head, than in thy heart. Thy invention indeed in prayer by this will be more barren, but thy heart may be as fruitful over the few broken diſjoynted ſentences that by piece-meal fall from thee, as theirs with their eloquent Oration. Thy language will not be ſo trim and gaudy, but thy ſoul and ſpirit may be as ſound, yea more upright than many of thoſe will be found, who charm the ears of

thoſe

those that joyn with them, by the Musick their words make. 'Tis possible a man may have a rotten body under a gorgeous suit; and, *sub hâc purpurâ linguæ pannosam conscientiam*, under this bravery of language a poor ragged conscience. Who had not rather be the healthful man in plain cloaths, than unsound and diseased, under rich Apparel? Sincere with mean gifts, rather than rotten-hearted with raised parts. We do not count him the best Patriot in the *Parliament-House*, that plays the Orator, and makes more *Rhetorical Speeches* than others, but he that takes with the best side, and whose Vote is sure not to be wanting to carry on a righteous Cause. It is not the *Rhetorick* of the *Tongue*, but the hearty *Amen*, which the sincere soul seals every holy request withall, that God values; and this thy honest heart will help thee to do; which his head cannot do for him, that wants this sincerity. It is not the fairness of the hand that gives the force to the Bond, but the person whose hand and seal it is; if it could, a *Scrivener* might make all the *Countrey* his Debtors. Gifts may make a fair Writing (which the Hypocrite can do) but faith and sincerity maketh a valid prayer; and this alone can lay claim to the good things of the promise. In a word, Sincere Soul (for so I take thee to be) and if such, though thou hast not these praying gifts as others, yet thou hast as much interest in Christ, *the unspeakable gift*, 2 Cor. 9. as any of them all. And for thy everlasting encouragement know, it is not those gifts in them, but this gift of God to thee and all believers, which is the Key that must open Gods heart, if any mercy be got thence: Yea, this *gift must sanctifie their glistering gifts*, as the *Altar* did the *Gold* upon it, or else they will be an Abhomination to the Lord.

CHAP. VIII.

Satans Policy to keep a Soul from this Duty, upon a pretence of present indisposition of Body.

Strat. 3.

SAtan and the Flesh too have their dilatory excuses to take thee off this duty, when thy stated usual time comes about for the performance of it. Dost thou never, Christian, when thou art addressing thy self to the Throne of grace, hear Satan and thy flesh whispering in thine ear, (Christian) What art thou going to do? This is not a fit time for thy praying; stay for a more convenient season. Here the Devil seems modest: He saith not, Pray not at all, but not now: Not dissolve, but adjourn the Court to a fitter time.

Answ. Now beware Christian, thy foot is near a snare: If thou takest the Devils counsel, and waitest for his convenient season, may be it will prove like *Fœlix his convenient season* for calling *Paul* to a further hearing, which, for ought we find, never came about. When the flesh or Satan beg time of thee, it is to steal time from thee. They put thee off duty at one time, on a design to shut thee out at last from this duty at any time. The Devil is a cunning Sophister, he knows a modest beggar may sooner obtain the little he asks, than he that sawcily asks that which carries more unreasonableness in the request. *Jephtah* who yielded to his Daughters desire for a few months reprieve, would, 'tis like, not have heard her, had she begg'd a full release from her fathers vow. A gracious soul is under a vow to call upon God;

God; he knows such a motion would be flung back with the Saints abhorrency upon his face, should he at the first dash bid him never pray more, and wholly leave his acquaintance with God; therefore he would seem very willing he should pray: Ay! by all means, saith he, I would not have you turn your back on your best Friend, but now is not so fit a season.

Two fair pleas Satan hath to cheat the Christian of his present season and opportunity for prayer.

The Christians present indisposition to prayer; or some worldly business that then stays to be dispatcht.

First, From his present indisposition to pray. Stay Christian, saith the Tempter, till thou art in a better temper for duty, and thou wilt pray to more purpose. Better not write, than scribble; Leave the work undone, than go about it, when thy hand is out. 1.

Now there is a *double indisposition*, which both Satan and the flesh make use of to colour their pretence with.

First, Indisposition of body: Some distemper lies at present on that; and *Scripture* (say these) tell thee, God loves *mercy rather than Sacrifice.* And it cannot be denied but the Scripture will reach as far as the body, for Gods commands are not cruel to it. 1.

Answ. But to help thee out of this snare, tell me plainly, How great is thy distemper of body? Haply thou art not so ill, but thou canst go about thy worldly business, though with some groans and complaints in the same: But when thou shouldst pray, then thy head akes and shoots more than before. Art thou well enough to go into thy shop, and not to pray in thy Closet? Canst thou waddle so far as to the Market, and not pray at Home? Canst thou overcome thy distemper so far as to traffique with the World, and not to Trade with Heaven? Surely all is not right; God is but little beholden to thee: May not God say, I deserve thy company as well as the World? But suppose thou beest right-down sick, and quite laid up from meddling in thy worldly employments; yet will this excuse thee from visiting the Throne of grace? God takes thee out of the shop to show thee the way into the Closet: He knocks thee off thy worldly trade, that thou mayst follow thy heavenly the more close. Thou art

not, indeed, able to pray in a continued discourse, as in Health; neither doth God expect it. Here that Scripture, which the devil would have thee abuse, is pat, and sutable to thy present state, *God loves mercy rather than Sacrifice.* Yet now, if ever, is the time for thee to shoot those *jacula præcatoria*, darts of ejaculatory prayer to God. When our body breaths shortest, it breaths quickest and oftnest. Though thou canst not pray long, yet thou mayst pray much in these pathetical Sallies of thy soul to Heaven. The Christian should have his Quiver full of these Arrows, which though short, go with a force. Christ never prayed more earnestly than in his Agony: which Prayer was of this nature, *Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*, Mat. 26. 39. And after a little Pause (for Nature to take some breath, by reason of that unspeakable burthen which then lay upon it) he shoots the same Dart again to Heaven thrice one after another, *Ver.* 44.

In a word, Christian, though thou canst not pray as thou wert wont, yet thou canst desire others to pray for thee and with thee: We are bid to send for the *Elders*, yea and beg prayers of others too. So pitiful is God to us, that when through our own weakness, we are disabled from delivering our own conceptions in prayer, that then we may bring forth (as *Lea*) on others knees; when we cannot go our selves as we were wont to the work, we may be carried on the shoulders of their prayers, and flie on the wings of their faith to heaven.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Satan's Stratagem to keep the Christian from Prayer, upon pretence of present indisposition of heart.

OH but Secondly, thou mayst say, 'Tis not the sickness of thy body, but the deadness of thy heart, and indisposition of thy soul, that keeps thee from duty. Thou wouldst fain have that in a better frame, and then thou wouldst not be long a stranger to it. 2.

SECT. I.

LET me ask thee (Christian) what thou hast found (in the observation of thy own heart) to be the fruit that hath grown from such put-offs and excuses. Hath neglect of duty at one time, fitted thee for it at another? I believe not. Sloth is not cured with sleep, nor laziness with idleness. If our leg be numb, we walk, and so it wears off. Satan knows, if thou playest the Truant to day, thou wilt be more loth to go to School to Morrow. Give the flesh a little scope and liberty, by thus unlacing thy self, and it will endure less to be straitned afterwards. There is something to do to bridle a wanton Beast, when he hath got the Bit once out of his mouth. The *Spouses* Coat sate very easie when on her back, and unwilling no doubt she was to be stript; but when once by a wile of Satan, she was perswaded to put it off, how loth was she then to get it on again! And therefore when ever you are turning from this or any other duty meerly *Answ.* 1.

ly upon this account, consider well what is like to follow. One of these two will come of it; Either thou wilt see thy sin, and return with shame and sorrow for thy neglect: And is it not less trouble to pray now, than upon such terms afterwards? A *Heathen* could say, He would *not sin to buy repentance*; And shouldst not thou have more wisdom to know which is a bad bargain for thy soul than he! Or *Secondly*, This neglect will beget another, and that a third, and so thou wilt run further in Arrears with thy conscience, till at last thou givest over all thoughts of renewing thy acquaintance with God, because thou hast discontinued it so long.

Sect. II.

2. EXamine from whence this present indisposition comes, and probably thou wilt find reason to charge it either upon some sinful miscarriage in thy Christian course, or on thy neglect of those preparatory means through which thou art to pass into the performance of this duty.

1. *First*, See whether thou hast not been tampering with some sin knowingly. There is an Antipathy betwixt sinning and praying, partly from guilt, which makes the soul shy of coming into Gods sight, because conscious of a fault. The child that hath mis-spent the day in play abroad, steals to Bed at Night, or playes least in sight for fear of a chiding, or worse, from his father. And also as it doth roile, and disorder the heart. Sin and Prayer are such contraries, that 'tis impossible at one stride to step from one to another. It is an ill time when the Fountain is stopt, or muddied, to go to draw Water thence. If the Work-mans Tools be blunt or gapt, no work can be well done, till a new edge be set on them. 'Tis the Devils policy, thus to disturb and unfit the Christian for duty, that he may leave it undone. And therefore let thy *first* care be to keep the fountain of thy heart clear all the day long, as remembring, that from it those holy affections, which in prayer thou art to poure forth to God, must be drawn. Look thou lendest not any power of thy soul to be Satan's Instrument in sins course foul work, lest thou

thou find it out of case when thou art to use it in this spiritual service. A good servant will not have her Dishes or Pots foul when they should be used, but stand clean, and bright, upon the Shelf, to be ready against they are call'd for. And so is the true Christian Characterized. 1 *Tim.* 2. 21. *If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a Vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Masters use, and prepared for every good work.* But *Secondly*, If thou findest guilt to be contracted, and thence a fear to come so nigh God, as this duty will bring thee, yea an estrangement also upon thy heart from this work, Thy best way is speedily to renew thy repentance, and so thy faith both for pardoning mercy and purging grace. New breaches are made up better than long quarrels. Green wounds healed easier than old sores. Spots washed out sooner when newly got, than when engrained by long continuance. Ply thee to the Throne of Grace. Water the earth, if thou canst, with thy tears, and fill Heaven with thy sorrowful sighs for thy sin; but by no means shift off the duty on this pretence; for that is not the way to mend the matter, but make it worse. *Jonah* did ill to consult his credit rather than the exaltation of Gods Mercy; and how he should come honourably off with his Embassage, than how the Name of the great God his Master that sent him, might be magnified. But he did worse when these sinful thoughts stirred in him (which he should have humbled himself for) made him run away from his Masters work also. Thus, Christian, 'tis ill done of thee to make a breach in thy holy course by tampering with any sin; but thou wilt commit a greater, if thou turnest thy back on God also in that Ordinance where thou shouldst humble thy self for thy former sin. Can one sin be a good Argument for committing another? Thou hast faln into sin in the day, wilt thou not therefore pray at night? Surely it were better to beg of God forgiveness of this, and more grace, that thou mayst not do the like or worse to morrow. Neglect of duty, is not the way to help thee out of the Pit thou art in, nor keep thee from falling into another. Take heed thou runnest not thy self further into temptation. Now is the time for the Devil to set upon thee, when this Weapon is out of thy hand. The best thou canst look for, is a storm from God to bring back thee his Run-away Servant to thy work again: And the sooner

it

it comes, the more Merciful He is to thee.

Sect. III.

2. IF upon thy faithful enquiry thou findeſt not thy heart reproach thee to have indiſpos'd thy ſelf for duty by any known ſin in the courſe of thy life, and yet thy heart continues lumpiſh and unfit for prayer, then probably thou wilt take thy ſelf tardy in thy actual preparation to the duty. Haſt thou therefore ſolemnly endeavoured by ſutable meditations, to blow the Coal of thy habitual grace, which though not quenched by any groſs ſin, yet may be deadned, and covered with ſome Aſhes, by thy being over-buſie in thy worldly employments? The Well is ſeldom ſo full, that Water will at firſt Pumping flow forth; neither is the heart commonly ſo ſpiritual after our beſt care in our worldly converſe (much leſs, when we ſomewhat overdo therein) to pour it ſelf into Gods boſome freely, without ſome labour to raiſe and elevate it: Yea, oft the Springs of grace lie ſo low, that only pumping will not fetch the heart up to a praying frame, but Arguments muſt be poured into the ſoul (like ſo many Pails of water into the Pump) before the affections riſe. Hence are thoſe Sóliloquies and Diſcourſes, which we find holy men uſe with their own hearts to bring them into a gracious temper, ſutable for Communion with God in Ordinances; *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul; and all that is within me, praiſe his holy Name: Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits*, Pſa. 103. 1, 2. It ſeems *David* either found or fear'd his heart would not be in ſo good a frame as he deſired, that he redoubles his charge; he found ſure his heart ſomewhat drowſie, which made him thus rub his eyes, and rouſe up himſelf, now going to God in this duty; ſometimes calling and exciting the heart will not do, but the heart muſt be chid, and taken up roundly: So *David* was fain to deal with himſelf at another time, *Pſalm* 42. *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul! and why art thou diſquieted within me?* Heavy birds muſt take a run before they can get upon the wing. 'Tis harder to get a great Bell up, than to Ring it when 'tis rais'd; and ſo is it with our hearts, harder work we

ſhall

ſhall find it to prepare them for duty, than to perform it, when they are got into ſome order. Now haſt thou endeavoured this? If not, how canſt thou make this a pretence to wave the duty becauſe thou art indiſpoſed, when thou haſt not uſed the means to have thy Clog taken off? This is, as if one ſhould excuſe himſelf, for not coming to the Feaſt unto which he was invited, becauſe Forſooth he was not dreſt, when indeed he never went about to make him ready.

SECT. IV.

BUt Thirdly, If thou canſt Anſwer to the former Queſtion, and in ſome uprightneſs ſay, that thou haſt not neglected preparatory means, but yet thy indiſpoſition and deadneſs of heart remains. Though this caſe be not ſo ordinary, yet 'tis poſſible that a Chriſtian may walk on thoſe Coals of Meditation, which at one time would ſet his ſoul all on fire, and put his graces into a flame, yet at another he may find little warmth from them. And we will ſuppoſe this to be thy caſe; therefore conſider that God may and doth ſometimes conceal his enlivening preſence, till the ſoul be engaged in the work. And would it not grieve thee to loſe ſuch an opportunity? How oft haſt thou found thy ſelf at the entrance into a duty becalmed, as a ſhip which at firſt ſetting Sail, hath hardly Wind to ſwell its Sails (while under the ſhore and ſhadow of the Trees) but meets a freſh gale of Wind, when got into the open Sea? Yea, didſt thou never launch out to duty as the *Apoſtles* to Sea, with the Wind on thy teeth, as if the Spirit of God, inſtead of helping thee on, meant to drive thee back, and yet haſt found Chriſt walking to thee before the duty was done, and a proſperous Voyage made of it at laſt? *Abraham* ſaw not the Ram which God had provided for his Sacrifice, till he was in the Mount. *In the Mount of prayer God is ſeen*; even when the Chriſtian does oft go up the Hill towards duty with a heavy heart, becauſe he can as yet have no ſight of him. Turn not therefore back, but on with courage, he may be nearer than thou thinkeſt on: *In that ſame hour*, ſaith Chriſt, *it ſhall be given unto you*, Mat. 10. 19. *In the day* (ſaid *David*) 3.

vid) that I cried, thou answeredst me, and gavest me strength in my soul, Psal. 138. 'Tis no more than the promise gives us security for, *The way of the Lord is strength.* Just as it is with a man, who at first going out on a journey, feels a lassitude and feebleness in his Limbs, but the further he goes, the more strength he gathers, as if there arose strength out of the ground he walks on. Truly the Saints find this in Gods way; *Psalm* 119. 55, 56. *I have remembred thy Name in the Night, and have kept thy Law; this I had because I kept thy precepts.* His meaning is, by doing his best endeavour to keep them, he got this by the hand, to be able to keep them better, and he thinks himself so well paid (in this) for his pains, that he glories in it, *This I had.* So the Saint hath this for praying, he gets his heart in tune to pray better. We may observe those Children in Scripture, which came of barren wombs, were the greatest comforts to their Parents when they had them. Witness, *Isaac*, *Samuel*, and *John.* The greater deadness and barrenness thy heart (to thy own sence) lay under, and the less hope thou hadst to get out of the indisposition, the more joyful will the quickening presence of God be to thee. The Assistance that thus surprizeth thee beyond thy expectation, will be a true *Isaac*, a child of joy and laughter. And a double Reason is obvious why God doth thus.

First, From the great delight the Lord takes in pure obedience, *Obedience is better than Sacrifice*, 1 Sam. 15. To pray in obedience, is better than barely to pray. This is the Jewel in the Ring of Prayer. Now to pray in pure obedience, is to set upon the duty when there is no assistance visible, or encouragement sensible. To go to duty not because God puts forth his hand to lead me, but because he holds forth his Precept to command me. As when a *General* commands his Army to march, if then the Souldiers should stand upon terms, and refuse to go, except they have better Cloaths, their Pay in hand, or the like, and then they will march; this would not shew them an obedient disciplin'd Army: But if at the reading of their Orders, they presently break up their Quarters, and set forth, though it be Midnight when the Command come, and they without money in their Purse, cloaths on their back (leaving the whole care of themselves for these things, to their General, and they

they only attend how they may beſt fulfill his command) Theſe may be ſaid to march in obedience. Thus when a ſoul after a faithful uſe of means, finds his heart dead and dull, yet in obedience to the command, kneels down (though the ſenſe of his inability is ſo great, that he queſtions whether he ſhall have power to ſpeak one word to God as he ought) yet had rather be dumb and dutifull, than diſobedient in running away from his charge. Here is an obedient ſoul, and may hope to meet God in his way with that which he cannot carry with him: As the *Lepers*, who when they went in obedience to Chriſt's command, *to ſhew themſelves to the Prieſt*, were cured by the way, though they ſaw nothing of it when they ſet forth.

CHAP. X.

His Policy to ſtart ſome Worldly buſineſs to be juſt then diſpatcht when the Chriſtian's hour for prayer comes, How it may be repelled.

ANother fetch that Satan hath to make the Chriſtian put off the duty of prayer as unſeaſonable at preſent, is ſome worldly buſineſs or other that then is to be deſpacht, and therefore ſuggeſts ſuch thoughts as theſe to divert him. I have no leiſure now to pray, this buſineſs is to be done, and that neceſſary occaſion calls for my attendance, I will therefore adjourn the performance till I can come with more freedome and leiſure. 2.

Now to arm thee (Christian) against such dilatory pretences, I shall lay down a few directions.

1. *First*, Take heed of overcharging thy self with worldly business, which then is done when thou graspest more thereof than will consist with thy heavenly trade, and Christian Calling. God allows thee to give to the world that which is the worlds, but he will not suffer thee to pay the world, that which is due to him. Rob *Mary* to lend to *Martha*; Steal from thy closet to pay to the kitchin. Thy particular calling is intended by God to be a help to thy general, it will therefore be thy sin to make that an encombrance which is given as an advantage. And that which is it self a sin, cannot be a plea for the neglect of a duty. That servant would mend the matter but little, who excuseth his not-doing a business his Master commanded, by telling him he had drunk too much when he should have gone about it. Nor will thy apology for passing thy time prayer of be better that say'st thou hadst so much to do in the world, that thou couldst not find time to pray in.

2. *Secondly*, Labour to time thy seasons for prayer with discretion in the things of the world, if we have two businesses to dispatch in the same day, we contrive, if possible, that they may not interfere. And certainly a holy providence to forecast how we may reconcile dayly the demands of our Closet and Shop, our Devotions and Worldly Employments, by laying out each its portion of time, would ordinarily prevent much disorder and confusion in our walking. The *Prophet* speaks of *the liberal mans devising liberal things*. We could not easily want time to pray in, if our hearts would but perswade our heads to devise and study, how our other affairs might be disposed of without prejudice to our Devotions. That Cloth which a Bungler thinks too little for a Garment, a good Workman can make one of it, and leave some for another use also. O there is a great deal of Art in cutting out time with little loss.

3. *Thirdly*, Be sure thou keep'st a right notion of prayer in thy thoughts. Some look upon every minute of time spent in the Closet, lost in the Shop, and no wonder, such are easily kept from prayer upon any pretended business, who think it a prejudice to their other affairs. But I hope, Christian, thou art better taught. Does the Husbandman mow the less for whetting his

his Sythe? Doth a good Grace before meat spoyle the Dinner? No: Nor doth prayer hinder the Christian either in his employments or enjoyments, but expedites the one, and sanctifies the other. All agree, That to the dispatch of a business (as to the winding of a skein of silk) nothing conduceth more, than to begin at the right end of it. And to be sure, the right end of any business is to begin with God, and engage him to help us. *Acknowledge God in all thy Wayes, and lean not to thy own understanding*, &c.

Fourthly, The more streights and difficulties thou con- 4.
querest to keep up thy Communion with God, the more kindly it is taken of God. No Friend is more welcome to us, than he who breaks through many occasions to give us a visit. There is little cost, and so little love in an idle mans visit; he that comes to see us because he hath nothing else to do. *Mary* was Christs Favorite, who trode the World under her feet, that she might sit at Christs feet. And the *Bethshemites*, who in their zeal (I confess their case is extraordinary) came out of their very *Harvest-field where they were reaping, to offer a Sacrifice to the Lord*, 1 Sam. 6. 13.

Fifthly, Be faithful and impartial in considering the im- 5.
portance and necessity of that business which is propounded as an Apology for not performing this duty at thy usual season. It cannot be denied, but such a necessary occasion may emerge and fall out, for which the Christian may without sin, adjourn the Solemn performance of his Devotions to another more fit time. Who doubts, but a Christian may, when he riseth, go to quench his Neighbours house on fire, though by this he be kept out of his Closet, and detain'd from offering to God that Solemn morning sacrifice of praise and prayer he was wont? Yea, though the occasion be not so extraordinary: If it be *First*, About that which is *lawful* in it self. *Secondly*, Of *importance*. *Thirdly*, *Necessarily* then to be dispatcht. And *Fourthly*, If it surprizeth us, and we do not bring it upon our selves by our own fault, the duty of prayer may without sin be adjourn'd for a fitter time. But let us take heed of stamping a pretended Necessity on things and actions, only to gratifie our lazy hearts with a handsome excuse, whereby we may both save the pains of performing a duty, and also escape a chiding from our conscience for the non-performance

mance of it. Of all Fools, he is the worſt, that is witty to put a cheat on himſelf, and eſpecially on his ſoul: Such a one muſt expect, that the leſs his conſcience barks at preſent, the more it will bite when it ſhall be unmuzled. *Again*, if the occaſion be, as is ſaid, important and neceſſary, whereby thou art called off from the Solemn performance of this duty at preſent: Then, *Firſt*, Lift up thy heart in an ejaculatory prayer to God, to guide and guard thee: This is the ſhort Dagger thou art to uſe for thy defence againſt temptation, when thou haſt not time to draw the long Sword of Solemn Prayer. Thus thou mayſt pray in any place, company, or employment. A ſhort *Parentheſis* interrupts not the ſence of a diſcourſe, but gives an Elegancy to it. And a ſhort ejaculation to Heaven, will not interrupt any buſineſs thou art about, but advantage it much. *Secondly*, Be careful to recover this loſs which thy worldly buſineſs hath put thee to in thy communion with God, by more abounding in the duty upon thy next opportunity. The Tradeſman who is kept from his Dinner on the Market day, goes the ſooner to his Supper, and eats the freer meal at Night. If you be hindred of your reſt one Night by buſineſs, you will take it up the next. O that we were as wiſe for our ſouls, what we are prevented of at one time, to recover with advantage at another, by a doubled enlargement of our hearts in our Prayers and Meditations!

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Satan's Policy to discourage the Christian from Prayer, under a pretence, The mercies he would beg, are too great for him to hope he shall ever receive.

SAtan discourages sometimes the Christian when on his way to this duty, from the greatness of those requests which he hath to put up to the Throne of Grace. Thou art going to pray (Christian, will he say) and will nothing serve thee less than pardon of sin, love and favour of God, with eternal life? &c. Surely thou art too free of anothers Purse, and too kind to thy self, if thou thinkest to be welcome at Gods door with so bold an Errand. This is a Boon reserved for some few Favourites, and darest thou think so well of thy self, that thou art one of them? *Stratagem 3.*

Now to Arm thee, Christian, against this, that thou mayst neither be kept from the duty, nor go misgivingly to it upon this account, *The greatness of thy request*, Ponder upon these five Considerations, which will amount to a full Answer to this Cavil. The defensive.

SECT. I.

OPpose the greatness of that God thou art going to make thy addres unto, against the greatness of thy request. We are bid *Deut.* 32. 3. *to ascribe greatness to our God:* And if ever, 1.

ver, especially when kneeling down to pray. Wert thou to put up thy request to some Puny Prince, or petty creature, thou hadst reason to consider, whether thy Pitcher were not too great that thou wouldst have fill'd. Possibly thou mayst ask such a one more at one clap, than he is worth. *Help O Lord, my King* (said the Woman in the Famine of *Samaria*) yet she had not relief; *If the Lord do not help, whence shall I help thee?* 2 Kings 6. Or possibly if he hath power, he may want a heart to part with so much as will serve thy turn; there are many of *Nabals* name in the World, such Churls, who think every bit of bread lost, that they eat not themselves; yea, some who grutch their own Belly its necessary food. Wert thou at the door of such as those, what couldst thou expect but cold welcome? But remember, he is a great God, great in Power: Thou canst not over-ask; thou mayst draw thine Arrow to the head, and yet not over-shoot the Power of God; even when thou hast drawn thy desires to the highest pitch, he will be above thee; *For he is able to do exceedingly above what we can ask or think.* Wouldst thou have thy sins pardoned? Yes, if they were not too great, thou sayest: But can God at once discount such a summe, and discharge so vast a Debt, that hath been gathering many years by a full Trade of constant sinning, with so great a stock of means and mercies as I have had, and thereby the unhappy advantage of making the greater return? *Yes,* he is able *abundantly to pardon,* without any wrong to Himself, or controul from any other. The Soveraign Power of Life and Death being in his hands, he is accountable to none, as not for Acts of Justice, so neither of mercy. *Who shall condemn? 'tis God that justifies,* Rom. 8. If indeed a man forgive thee a wrong done unto him, thou canst not think thy self therefore acquitted by God; his wrath may still abide on thee. Man cannot give away Gods right. Were a man so kind to forgive the Thief that robb'd him, yet 'tis not in his power to discharge him of the penalty of the Law. But if the *Prince*, who is the Law-giver, will do it, none can gain-say. If God will pass an Act of mercy, thou art free indeed; for the power lies in his hands. Is it any Masterly lust, from whose Tyranny thou wouldst beg deliverance? The God thou prayest to, is able to break open thy prison-door, and make thee, a poor captive, go out free. He can give these thine enemies as dust to thy

thy Sword, and as driven ſtubble to thy Bow, yea deſtroy them with a caſt of his eye, *The Lord looked on the Egyptians, and troubled their Hoſt*, Exod. 14.24. His very look was as heavy as a Mill-ſtone about their necks; preſently they ſank, Horſe and Rider, like Lead to the bottome of the Sea. And ſin and Satan are no more before God, than were *Pharaoh* and his Hoſt. In a word, Is it comfort thou wouldſt ask if it might be had? Oh! know, he is a Creator thou prayeſt to; though thy heart were as void of comfort, as the Chaos was of light, yet can He with a word, cauſe a new heaven of joy to ariſe out of thy confuſed ſoul, and make thee in one moment to ſtep out of darkneſs into light; neither is his mercy leſs than his power. Oh launch therefore into this banckleſs bottomeleſs Sea by thy faith; behold the wonders of God in theſe depths, and do not ſtand reaſoning thy ſelf into unbelief by any uncomely compariſons between God and the narrow-hearted creature; *He is God, and not man*; none of theſe defects are to be found in his mercy, which, we impotent creatures, find in our ſelves. The paleneſs we ſee ſometimes, is not in the Sun, but from the clouds that interpoſe. The ſtars do not blinck nor twinckle, as is thought, but we (becauſe of their vaſt diſtance, and our weak Organ) cannot behold them with a fixed eye: Nor have the jealouſies and fears entertained by tempted ſouls (to the diſparagement of the mercy of God) any foundation in the *Divine Nature*, but are meer *entia rationis*, Bug-bears, which through the darkneſs of their troubled ſpirits, and diſtemperature of a melancholy fancy, Satan hath the advantage of affrighting them with. O beware therefore thou doſt not disfigure the ſweet lovely face of Gods mercy (which ſmiles alike upon every poor, penitent, praying ſoul) while thou fancieſt God to have a caſt of this his eye, and to look more favourably upon one than another, leſt by this you do betray the glorious Name of God to be rent in pieces by your cruel unbelief! If you once come to wrap up God in your hard thoughts as ſlow to hear, hard to be wrought on with your prayers and tears, truly then Satan may eaſily perſwade you to commit any ſin againſt him, becauſe you expect no mercy from him.

SECT. II.

2. OPpose the promise to thy fears: There is no mercy thou canst desire, but is promised before hand unto the prayer of faith; the mercy thou wouldst have, is already Voted in heaven, and the Grant past, only God stays for thy coming over to the Throne of Grace, there to lay thy claim to the promise before he issueth it forth. The mercy lies in the womb of the promise, but stayes for thy prayer of faith to obstetricate, and give it a fair deliverance. *The children are come to the birth* (said *Hezekiah*) The promise is big, *wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left*, Isa. 37. That is, if any thing will help, it must be that. What can a Petitioner desire more in his Address to a Prince for some great favour, than to be assured not only the Prince is of a gracious merciful nature, but also that he hath obliged himself to give that which he hath in his thoughts to desire? And shall only the promises of God be counted light and little worth! Have you not heard of such a promise, *Ask, that your joy may be full?* Did ever a vain word drop from the lips of Truth? Doth he make an Order one day, and reverse it another? Are his words Yea, and Nay? And not rather *yea and Amen for ever*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. Beggars use to be quick-sighted. *Benhadads* servants saw light at a little hole; and gather'd from a few kind words which dropp'd from *Ahabs* mouth, that there was mercy raked up in his heart towards their Master, which they soon blew up. *Joab* saw *Davids* bowels working towards *Absalom* through the casement of his countenance, and therefore lets down the *Widows Parable* as a Bucket to draw out that mercy which lay in his heart, like Water in a deep Well. How much more encouragement hast thou, Christian, to plead with thy God, who art not put to gues at Gods thoughts, but hast the assurance of plain promises for thy good speed! Oh what fools, and how slow of heart are we to believe the good Word of God! If *Moses* supposed his brethren would have understood, by the kind visit he gave them, and his friendly Office in rescuing one single *Israelite* from his Oppressors hand, that God would by him deliver them all; how much more may God expect that his people should understand his pur-

purposes of love towards them, when he exposeth his heart to so open a view of their faith by his promise, and hath sealed the truth thereof with so many examples to whom already full payment hath been made of the same? And do we yet read them as once the *Eunuch* that sweet promise, *Isa.* 53. and understand not the meaning of them? Do we yet sit so near our comfort, as *Hagar* by the Well, and our eyes held not to see it? Can we yet walk over the promises as barren ground, when with a little digging into them, we might find a treasure to pay all our debts, and supply all our wants?

Sect. III.

OPpose to thy fears not only the greatness of the promise, but also the valuable consideration upon which they are made. Christ pays for what thou prayest. Thou indeed beggest Almes, but Christ demands the same as debt. God is merciful to thee, but just to him. And therefore (Christian) though it becomes thee to sink thy self beneath the least mercy in thy own thoughts, yet it behoves thee to be tender of Christs credit, whose merit is as far above the greatest mercy thou canst beg, as thou art beneath the least. The father will give you little thanks for casting any dishonourable reflection upon his son, on whom himself hath heaped so much glory; yea, with whose honour his own is so interwoven, that whosoever dishonours the Son, dishonours the Father that sent him. 3.

Now there are three Priviledges purchased for every believer; and none of them can be lost by us without dishonour to him.

First, He hath purchased a liberty to pray; it had been death to come on such an Errand to God, till he had by his blood paved a way, and procured a safe conduct, *Heb.* 10. 17.

Secondly, An ability to pray as he purchased the Spirit for us, called therefore, *the Spirit of promise.*

Thirdly, The safe return of our prayers; *Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you*, John 16. 23. Indeed it is his business now in Heaven, to own our cause there in open Court, and to present his blood as ready money to be laid

down for all his Saints beg, that no demurre be made to their requests: So that either thou must blot this Article of *Christs intercession* out of thy *Creed*, or else put thy self to shame for questioning thy entertainment with God, when thou hast so good a friend at Court to speak for thee.

Sect. IV.

4. THE greatness of thy request cannot hinder thy speeding, because they are most welcome that ask most. Who are the persons frowned on at the Throne of Grace, but those who lay out the strength of their desires, and bestow their greatest importunitie, for mercies of least weight and worth? *Hosea* 7. 14. *They have not cried unto me with their heart when they howled on their beds.* Mark! the Lord did not account that they prayed at all, for all their loud cry, And why? but because he disdain'd their low and drossie spirit, in crying loudest for that which deserved least, as the following words will resolve us, *They assemble themselves for Corn and Wine, and rebell against me,* They would have a good Crop, with a full Vintage, and these scraps should serve them, so as not to trouble God for any more. God, his love and favour are quite left out of the story. May they but have their bellies cram'd, they have all their wish, and leave the other for those that like them better. Oh how God abhorres these prostrate souls, and carnal prayers! When men *tithe Mint and Cummin* in their prayers, but neglect the weightier things of the promises, such are an interest in Christ, forgiveness of sin, a new heart, grace here and glory hereafter: Or when they aim at low and base ends in praying for these things that in themselves are noble and high. And therefore fear not the greatness of thy request; God had rather give thee heaven, than earth; He can more willingly bestow himself on thee that art in love with him, than a crust of bread on another that regards him not. The greater the mercy is thou askest, the greater rent and revenue wilt thou pay him for it. The less he gives, the less he receives. By low requests thou wrongest two at once. Thou art a Thief to thy self in wanting what thou may'st have for asking:

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In bringing a little Veſſel, when thou might'ſt have a great one filled. Neither art thou ſo good a friend to thy God, as thou ſhouldſt; for the leſs grace thou haſt from him, the leſs glory thou wilt return unto him. The reflex beams are proportionable to the lightſome body they come from. Where grace is weak, the reflection it makes of praiſe and glory to God, can be but weak and dark.

SECT. V.

5.

GOD is ſo free and redundant in communicating his mercy, that he exceeds his Peoples modeſty in asking. He gives them commonly their prayers with an over-plus, more than they have faith or face to ask; As *Naaman*, when *Gehazi* asked *one Talent*, would needs force *two* upon him. *Abraham* asked a child of God, when he wanted an Heir in whom he might live when dead. Now God promiſes him a *Son*, and more than ſo, *a numerous off-ſpring*; yea, more ſtill, ſuch an off-ſpring, that in his off-ſpring *all the Nations of the earth ſhall be bleſſed. Jacob*, he deſired but Gods paſs, under the protection of which he might go and return ſafely, with food and rayment enough to keep him alive, *Gen.* 28. 20. Well, this he ſhall have; but God thinks it not enough, and therefore ſends him home with *two bands*, who went out a poor fugitive, with little beſides his Pilgrims ſtaff. *Solomon prays* for *wiſdom*, and God throws in wealth and honour, 2 *Chron.* 1.10. The woman of *Canaan* begs a *crum* (as much as we would caſt to a Dog) and Chriſt gives her a *childs portion*; ſhe came to have her ſick childe made well, and with it ſhe hath the life of her own ſoul given her. Yea, Chriſt puts the Key of his treaſure into her own hand, and leaves her as it were to ſerve her ſelf; *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt*, Mat. 15.28.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Satans endeavour to interrupt the Christian at Prayer, by wandring roving thoughts, and his design both against God and the Saint therein.

2. A Second Design Satan hath against the Christian, is, to interrupt him in the duty (when he can by no means keep him from it) 'Tis hard to steal a prayer, and the Devil not know what thou art going about. He watches thy motions (Christian) and is at thy heels wherever thou turnest: If thou art about any evil action, he is at thy elbow to jogg thee on, or before thee to remove every stone out of the way, that the bowl may go the more smoothly on, and thou mayst not be sick of the enterprize by the rubs thou meetest in the way. *Ahab* had but a Plot hatching in his thoughts of going up to *Ramoth-Gilead*, and presently *Satan* hath his Knights of the Post whom he sends to bid him go up and prosper. *David* himself had but some proud thoughts stirring him up to number the people, Satan takes the advantage, and works with the humour now moving, whereby it soon ripen'd into that sore, which God launced with so sharp a judgment as the loss of seventy thousand men. Now he is as skilful and ready at hand to disturb a holy action, as to promote a wicked. When the *Sons of God* come to present themselves before the Lord, Satan forgets not to be among them; he is no *Recusant*; scruples not to be present when you worship God; indeed he is first there, and last thence. Sometimes thou shalt find him injecting motions of his own; sometimes wire-drawing thy own; when he sees a vain thought, a sin sprung by thy wan-

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ton fancy, he will help thee to purſue the Chaſe. To be ſure, he will be at one end of every inordinate motion of thy heart; either the father to beget, or the Nurſe to bring them up.

Theſe are ſo many and diverſe, that we may as well tell the Atoms we ſee in a Sun-beam, as number and ſort this miſcelaneous heap of roving thoughts which are incident to the Chriſtian in prayer. Sometimes he will inject, ſuch as are ſinful, proud, filthy, yea blaſphemous thoughts, not that he hopes to find entertainment in the Chriſtians heart for ſuch gueſts, much leſs to make a ſettlement of them there with the gracious ſouls conſent; but to make a hurly burly, and confuſion in his ſpirit, whereby (as upon ſome ſudden ſcare in our Aſſemblies) the holy exerciſe he is now about, may be hindered. Sometimes he will prompt thoughts holy in themſelves (but impertinent) which, at another time, himſelf would oppoſe with all his might, but now preſents them, becauſe moſt likely to find welcome, and fit enough to ſerve his preſent purpoſe, being though good fruit, yet brought forth in a bad ſeaſon. I believe none, that have any acquaintance with this duty, and their hearts in it are altogether ſtrangers to Satans ſlights of this nature.

Now he hath a double plot; *One* levell'd againſt God himſelf; *another* againſt the Chriſtian thereby.

SECT. I.

1. FIrſt, *againſt God.* The Devil knows very well, that not the leaſt part of his tribute of Honour, is by the Chriſtian paid upon his knees in this Solemn act of Divine worſhip, to intercept which, is both his great ambition and endeavour. Nay, his deſpairs not (if his deſign takes) to make the Chriſtian diſhonour him moſt, where God looks his Name ſhould be above all ſanctified. Indeed thoſe have the unhappy opportunity of caſting the greateſt indignities on God, who are admitted to ſtand neareſt to him. Should he who hath the honour to ſet the Crown on his Princes head, bring it in a filthy caſe, and ſo clap it on; or inſtead of the Kings own Royal Crown, bring ſome ridiculous one of ſtraw, or ſuch like ſtuff contrived on purpoſe to make laughter,

ter; what greater scorn could such a one possibly invent to throw upon his Prince! The Attributes of God are his Royal Diadem, and it is no small honour that the great God puts upon the Christian, by admitting him as it were to set this Crown on his head, which he doth, when in prayer he gives him the glory of his Majesty and Holiness, Power and Mercy, Truth and Faithfulness, &c. with such humble adoration, and holy ravishment of affection as may comport with the infinite perfections of his Deity. But if our present thoughts in prayer be not of God, or not suitable to God and these his glorious excellencies, we pollute his Name, and not honor it; we mock him, not worship him; in a word, we pull off his Crown (as much as in us lies) rather than set it on. Now doth not thy heart tremble, Christian, in thy bosome, to think, thou shouldst be Satans instrument to offer such an indignity as this unto thy God and King! Thou art (if a Saint) the Temple of the Holy Ghost, prayer the spiritual sacrifice which from the Altar of a humble heart thou art to offer; wilt thou now suffer Satan to sit in this Temple of God, and exalt himself there, by any vain, much less vile thoughts, above God himself, whom thou art worshipping! Suppose while a Prince is at Dinner, a company of impudent Ruffians should rush into the Room through the negligence of the Princes servants that are waiting on him, and they should throw the dishes, one this way, another that way, would not these servants deserve a severe rebuke that lookt no better to the door? Ordinances of worship are Gods Table, the Sacrifices under the Law, called *Gods food* and *bread*. When the Saint is praying, the King of Heaven sits at his Table, *Cant.* 1. 12. The Dishes served up, are the graces of his Spirit in the Saint. Now wandring thoughts they come in, and turn the Table as it were upside down, they spill the Spicknard which thou shouldst pour forth: How ill may thy God take it, that thou lookest no better to the door of thy heart!

Sect. II.

2. *Secondly*, His spight is at thee, Christian. *First*, If he can get thee to sport with these, or sluggishly yield to them without making

making any vigorous resistance, that prayer, he knows, will neither do him hurt, nor thy self good. Dost think God will welcome that prayer to heaven, which hath not thy heart to bear it company thither? And how can thy heart go with it, when thou hast sent it another way? 'Twere a vain thing to expect that ship should make a prosperous Voyage, which is set adrift to Sea to be carried whither every wave it meets will drive it, without any Pilot to steer it to a certain Haven, or such a one that hath no skill or care to hold the Helm with a steady hand: Such are the prayers that come from a roving heart: Will God hear thee when thou mockest him? And if this be not to mock him, what is? Like Children that give a knock at a door and then run away to their play again. Thus thou rearest up thy voice to God, and then art gone in thy roving thoughts to hold chat with the world or worse, forgetting whom thou spakest last to. Is not this to play bo-peep with God? *Magnam injuriam Deo facio, cum precor, ut meas preces exaudiat, quas ego qui fundo, non exaudio. Deprecor illum, ut mihi intendat, ego vero, nec mihi, nec illi, intendo.* Thus the holy man complains of himself: How injurious and unworthy of God his carriage was in prayer, *I would have God* (saith he) *hear that prayer which my self doth not, when I put it up; I would have Gods ear attentive to me, when I neither mind God, nor my self when I pray. Secondly,* He disturbs thee in praying, that he may make thee weary of praying. Indeed he is not likely to miss his mark, if thou letteſt these vermine go on to breed in thy heart; for these will rob thee of the sweetness of the duty; and when the Marrow is once out, thou wilt easily be perswaded to throw the bone away. *Omnis vita gustu ducitur.* He is in danger to forsake his meat, who hath lost his relish of it. Prayer is a tedious weary work to him, that hath no pleasure in performing of it; and weariness *in it*, stands next door to being weary *of it*. *Thirdly*, Thou provokest the Spirit of God (that alone can carry you through the work) to withdraw his assistance. Who will help him that minds not what he does? You know what *Joab* said to *David*, when he indulged his inordinate passion for the loss of *Absalom*, *If thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night, and that will be worse with thee than all the evil that befell thee*, 2 Sam. 19. 7. Truly, either thou must speedily rouse thy self out of thy

ſloth and non-attendance, or elſe the Spirit will be gone, and he departed, it will be worſe with thee than ever. Who haſt thou then to help thee in thy work? And thou wilt find it harder to bring him back, than to keep him from going. The neceſſary infirmities which cleave to thy imperfect ſtate (if proteſted againſt) ſhall not drive him away, but if thou lett'ſt them neſtle in thy heart, he takes it as thy giving him warning to be gone. An affront done to an *Embaſſadour* by the baſer ſort of people as he walks in the ſtreet (while reſident in a forreign State) may be paſt over; but when ſuch ſhall find countenance from the Prince, it then makes a breach. Take heed therefore of ſhewing favour to ſuch Diſturbers of the League betwixt God and thy ſoul. Thy heart which ſhould be a houſe of prayer, Chriſt will not endure to have it a place of Merchandize. Either thou muſt whip theſe buyers and ſellers out, or the ſpirit will go out. We read of an *abhomination of deſolation ſtanding in the Holy Place*, Mat. 24. which ſome interpret to be the *Roman Enſigns* there diſplay'd when *Jeruſalem* was taken. This Abhomination uſher'd in Deſolation. What doſt thou by thy roving thoughts, but ſet up an abhomination in the Temple of thy heart? Oh! down with theſe, as thou wouldſt not be left deſolate, and wholly void of Gods gracious preſence with thee.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains the firſt cauſe of roving thoughts in prayer, with its cure.

Queſt. *BUT it may be now you will ask, What counſel can you give to arm us againſt both theſe incurſions of Satan, and bublings of our own vain hearts in prayer? How can we keep either our hearts in, or theſe out?*

Im-

Impoſſible indeed it is wholly to prevent them, they come ſo ſuddenly and ſecretly, even as lightning in at the Window. We may as well keep the Wind out of our houſe (which gets in at every crevice) though the doors be ſhut, as wholly free our hearts from their diſturbance. Yet this will not diſoblige us from our utmoſt care and endeavor to hinder the prevalency of them. Humours while rouling here and there, do not endanger us ſo much, as when they gather to a head, and ſettle in ſome joint and part of the body. I have read of ſome *Eaſtern* parts of the *world*, where ſuch multitudes of Locuſts and Caterpillers are ſeen, that they almoſt darken the aire as they flie, and devour every green thing where they light. The Inhabitants therefore when they perceive this Army hovering over them, by making fires in their fields, keep them from lighting, with the ſmoke that aſcends therefrom. Thou canſt not hinder theſe roving thoughts from flying now and then over thy head, but ſurely thou mayſt do ſomething that may prevent their ſettling. Towards which good work take theſe directions, which I ſhall endeavour to ſuit to thoſe ſeveral Cauſes from whence they proceed. *Anſw.*

SECT. I.

THE *firſt* cauſe, and indeed original of all other, is the natural vanity and levity of our minds, which are as inconſiſtent as quick-ſilver, that hath (they ſay) *Principium motus, ſed non quietis.* They are as unſtable as Water, which fluid element (as we ſee in a little of it poured on the ground) diffuſeth it ſelf hither and thither, and ſo is ſoon drunk up and loſt. Thus do our vain minds ſcatter themſelves into impertinencies, but never ſo much, as when we are converſant about ſpiritual duties: then above all we diſcover the lightneſs of our ſpirits, and this is not the leaſt part of that evil, which followed mans degeneracy, who by his fall wounded both head and heart. Now though there be a cure in part, made by the grace of God as to both theſe in a Saint, yet there ſtill remains a craze in his ſoul, whereby he is not able to dwell long upon ſpiritual things without ſome diſſipa-

tion of his thoughts, as innocent *Adam* could, who before his fall, might have walked through the whole world, and not have had one thought of his heart mis-placed, or turned from its right point by the diversity of objects he met, they being all to the eye of his soul, *a clear medium*, through which it passed to terminate it self in God, as the aire is now to our bodily eye through which it pierceth, and stays not till it comes at the body of the Sun. But alas it is with us, as with one that hath had his skull broke by some dangerous fall, who (when recovered) finds his brain so weakned, that when he goes about any serious business, he cannot intend much, or persist long, but is off and on, out and in; such vegaries and cross steps do our hearts take in duty, and this gives Satan advantage enough to work upon. If the ship be light for want of ballast, and a strong gust of wind arises too: Oh! how hard then is it to make it sail trim, or keep from toppling over! A vain heart, and a strong temptation together, makes sad work, when God stands by, and gives Satan leave to practice upon it. Be therefore careful to take in thy ballast before thou putst to sea. Labour to poyse thy heart before thou goest to pray: which that thou mayst do. First,

Sect. II.

INure thy self to holy thoughts in thy ordinary course. The best way to keep Vessels from leaking (when we would use them for some special occasion) is to let them stand full. A vain heart out of prayer, will be little better in prayer. The more familiar thou makest holy thoughts and savoury discourse to thee in thy constant walking, the more seasond, thou wilt find thy heart for this duty. A Scholar by often rubbing up his notions when alone, and talking of them with his Colleagues, makes them his own; so that when he is put upon any exercise, they are at hand, and come fresh into his head: Whereas another, for want of this filling, wants matter for his thoughts to feed on, which makes him straggle into many impertinencies before he can hit of that which suits his occasion. The carnal liberty, which we give our hearts in our ordinary walking, makes our thoughts more

more unruly and unsutable for duties of worship: For such thoughts and words leave a tincture upon the spirit, and so hinder the souls taking a better colour, when it returns into the presence of God. Walk in the company of sinful thoughts all the day, and thou wilt hardly shut the door upon them, when thou goest into thy Closet. Thou hast taught them to be bold; they will now plead acquaintance with thee, and croud in after thee, like little children, who if you play with them, and carry them much in your arms, they will cry after you when you would be rid of their company.

Sect. III.

2.

Possess thy heart with a reverential awe of Gods Majesty and Holiness. This (if any thing) will gird up the loyns of thy mind strait, and make thee, *hoc agere*, mind what thou art about. Darest thou toy and trifle with the Divine Majesty in a duty of his Worship? Carry thy self childishly before the living God, to look with one eye upon him, as it were, and with the other upon a lust? to speak one word to God, and chat two with the World? Does not thy heart tremble at this! *Sic ora* (saith *Bernard*) *quasi assumptus & præsentatus ante faciem ejus in excelso throno, ubi millia millium ministrant ei.* So pray as if thou wert taken up and presented before God sitting on his Royal Throne on high, with Millions of Millions of his glorious Servitors Ministring to him in Heaven. Certainly, the face of such a Court would awe thee. If thou wert but at the Bar before a Judge, and hadst a glass of a quarter of an hours length turn'd up (being all the time thou hadst allowed thee to improve for the begging of thy life now forfeited and condemn'd) would'st thou spare any of this little time to gaze about the Court, to see what Cloaths this man hath on, and what Lace another wears? God shame us for our folly in mis-spending our praying seasons. Is it not thy life thou art begging at Gods hands? and that a better, I trow! than the Malefactor sues for of his mortal Judge; and dost thou know whether thou shalt have so long as a quarter of an hour allowed thee when thou art kneeling down? and yet wilt

wilt thou ſcribble and daſh it out to no purpoſe upon impertinencies! If thou believeſt not God to be ſo great and glorious, why doſt thou pray? If thou doſt, why no better? Why no cloſer, and compact in thy thoughts? Will God judge us for every idle word that is ſpoken in our ſhop and houſe? at our work, yea ſport and recreation? And ſhall thy idle words in prayer not be accounted for? And are not thoſe idle words that come from a lazy heart, a ſleepy heart that minds not what it ſays? What procured *Nadab* and *Abihu* ſo ſudden and ſtrange a death? Was it not their ſtrange incenſe? And is not this ſtrange praying, when thy mind is a ſtranger to what thy lips utter? Behave thy ſelf thus to thy Prince, if thou dareſt. Let thy hand reach a Petition to him, and thine eye look, or thy tongue talk to another, would He not command this Clown, or rather Mad-man, to be taken from before him? *Have I need of mad-men, that you brought this fellow into my preſence?* 1 Sam. 21. 15. ſaid *Achiſh*, when *David* behaved himſelf diſcompoſedly. Oh! could you but look through the Key-hole, and ſee how glorious Angels in Heaven ſerve their Maker, who are ſaid to *behold the face of God continually*, ſurely thou wouldſt tremble to think of thy ſlightly performing this duty.

3. Go not in thy own ſtrength to this duty, but commit thy ſelf, by faith, to the conduct of the Spirit of God. God hath promiſed to prepare, or eſtabliſh (as the word is) the heart. Indeed then the heart is prepared, when eſtabliſht and fixt. A ſhaking hand may as ſoon write a right line, as our looſe hearts keep themſelves ſteady in duty. Shouldſt thou, with *Job*, make a Covenant with thine eye, and reſolve to bung up thine ear from all by-diſcourſe: How long thinkſt thou, ſhouldſt thou be true to thine own ſelf, who haſt ſo little command of thine own thoughts? Thy beſt way were to put thy ſelf out of thine own hands, and lay thy weight on him that is able to bear thee better than thy own legs. Pray with *David*, *Uphold me, Lord, with thy free Spirit*, Pſal. 51. 12. The Vine leaning on a Wall, preſerves it ſelf and its fruit, whoſe own weight elſe, without this help, would ſoon lay it in the dirt.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains the second cause of wandring thoughts in prayer, with its proper cure.

Second cause of these wandring roving thoughts in prayer, is a dead and an una- 2.
ctive heart in him that prayeth. If the affections be once down, then the Christian is as a City whose Wall is broken down: No keeping then the thoughts in, or Satan out. The soul is an active creature, either it must be employed by us, or it will employ us though to little purpose. Like our poor, find them work, and they keep at home, but let them want it, and you have them roving and begging all the Countrey over. The Affections are as the Master-Workmen, which set our thoughts on work. Love entertains the soul with pleasant and delightful thoughts on its beloved object. Grief commands in the soul to muse with sorrowful thoughts on its aile and trouble. So that, Christian, as long as thy heart bleeds in the sense of sinne, they will have no leasure, when thou art confessing sin, to rove and wander; if thy desires be livelie, and flame forth in thy Petitions with a holy zeal for the graces and mercies prayed for, this will be as a Wall of fire to keep thy thoughts at home. The lazy prayer, is the roving prayer. When *Israel* talked of travelling three dayes journey in the Wilderness, *Pharaoh* said, *Ye are idle, ye are idle*; Therefore they said, *Let us go.* As if he had said, Surely they have little to do, or else they would not think of gadding; and therefore to cure them of this, he commanded more work to be given, *Exod.* 3. We may truly say thus of

our wandring hearts, they are idle; we pray, but our affections are dead and dull. The heart hath little to do in the duty for the ſetting of its thoughts on work, only to ſpeak or read a few words, which is ſo eaſie a task, that a man may do it, and ſpare whole troops of his thoughts to be employed elſewhere at the ſame time. But now when the affections are up, melting into ſorrow in the confeſſion of ſin, ſallying forth with holy panting and breathing in its ſupplications, truly this fixeth the thoughts. The ſoul intended can no more be in two places together, than the body. And as theſe holy affections will prevent the ſouls wandring diſpoſition: ſo alſo make it more difficult for Satan to throw in his injections. Flies will not ſo readily light on a Pot ſeething-hot on the fire, as when it ſtands cold in the window. *Baalzebul* is one of the Devils names. That is, the god of a flie; in alluſion to the Idolatrous Sacrifices where flies were ſo buſie. This flie will not ſo readily light on thy Sacrifice when flaming from the Altar of thy heart with zeal. Now to preſerve thy affections in prayer warm and lively, let it be thy care to chaſe and ſtir up the natural heat that is undoubtedly in thee, if a Chriſtian by the ſerious conſideration of thy ſins, wants, and mercies. While thou art pondering on theſe, thine eye will affect thine heart: They will, as *Abiſhag* did to *David*, by laying them in thy boſome, bring thy ſoul to a kindly heat in thoſe affections, which thou art to act in the ſeveral parts of prayer. Thy ſins reviewed, and heightned with their aggravations, will make the ſprings of godly ſorrow to riſe in thy heart. Canſt thou chuſe but mourn, when thou ſhalt read thy ſeveral inditements to thy guilty ſoul now called to hold up its hand at the bar of thy Conſcience? Canſt thou hear how the holy Law of God hath been violated, his Spirit grieved, and his Son murdered by thy bloody hands, and this when he hath been treating thee mercifully, and not mourn! Surely, ſhould a man walk over a field after a bloody battel hath been fought, and there ſee the bodies, though of his enemies, lying weltring in their blood, his heart could not but then relent, though in the heat of battel his fury ſhut out all thoughts of pity; but what if he ſhould ſpy a father or a dear friend dead upon the place of the wounds which his unnatural hand had given, would not his bowels turn? Yes ſurely, if he carried the heart of a man in his boſome. Thou mayſt

gueſs,

gueſs, Chriſtian, by this, what help ſuch a meditation would afford toward the breaking of thy heart for thy ſins: Certainly, it would make thee throw away that unhappy dagger which was the inſtrument to give thoſe deep ſtabs to the heart of Chriſt, and this is the beſt mourning of all. Again, thy wants well weighed, would give wings to thy deſires. If once thou wert poſſeſſed with the true ſtate of thy affairs, how neceſſary it is for thee to have ſupplies from heaven, or to ſtarve, and die, and ſo in the reſt, &c.

CHAP. XV.

Contains a third cauſe of wandring thoughts in prayer, with its cure.

A Third cauſe of roving thoughts, is, incumbrance of worldly cares. 'Tis no wonder, that man can enjoy no privacy with God in a duty, who hath ſo many from the world rapping at his door to ſpeak with him, when he is ſpeaking to God. *Periclitatur pietas in negotiis.* Religion never goes in more danger, than when in a croud of worldly buſineſs. If ſuch a one prays, 'tis not long before ſomething comes in his head to take him off. *Iſaac went out to meditate, and behold the Camels.* The World is ſoon in ſuch a ones ſight, he puts forth one hand to heaven in a ſpiritual thought, but ſoon pulls it back, and a Worldly one ſteps before it, and ſo makes a breach upon his duty. *Dreams* (*Solomon* tells us) *come from a multitude of buſineſs.* And ſo do dreaming prayers: They are made up of Heterogeneal, independent thoughts. The Shop, Barn, Ware-houſe, are unfit places for prayer, I mean the Shop in the heart, and the Barn in the heart. I have read of one who was ſaid to be a Walking Library, becauſe 3.

he left not his learning with his Books in his ſtudy, but carried them about him wherever he went in his memory, and judgment, that had digeſted all he read, and ſo made them his own. And have we not too many Walking Shops and Barns, who carry them to bed and board, Church and Cloſet? And how can ſuch pray with an united heart, who have ſo many ſharers in their thoughts! *O anima ſancta ſola eſto, anne neſcis verecundum habes Sponſum!* Oh! holy ſoul, get thee alone if thou would'ſt have Chriſt give thee his loves; knoweſt thou not thou haſt a modeſt Husband? Indeed he gives the ſoul not his imbraces in a Croud, nor the kiſſes of his lips in the Market. *Jacob* ſends away his company to the other ſide of the River, and then God gave him one of the ſweeteſt meetings he had in all his life, let him now pray even a whole night if he will, and welcome. Now, Chriſtian, for thy help againſt theſe.

SECT. I.

I. LAbour to keep thy diſtance to the World, and that Soveraignty which God hath given thee over it in its profits, and pleaſures, or whatever elſe may prove a ſnare to thee. While the Father and Maſter know their place, and keep their diſtance, ſo long Children and Servants will keep theirs by being dutiful and officious; but when they forget this, the Father grows fond of the one, and the Maſter too familiar with the other, then they begin to loſe their Authority, and the other to grow ſawcy, and under no command; Bid them go, and it may be they'l not ſtir; ſet them a Task, and they will bid you do it your ſelf. Truly thus it fares with the Chriſtian; all the Creatures are his ſervants, and ſo long as he keeps his heart at a holy diſtance from them, and maintains his Lordſhip over them, not laying them in his boſome, which God hath put under his feet, *Pſal.* 8. all is well; he marches to the duties of Gods worſhip in a goodly order. He can be private with God, and theſe not be bold to croud in to diſturb him; but when we grow fond of, and too familiar with them, alas how are we peſter'd with them! We read of no undutifulneſs of *Hagar* towards her Miſtreſs while a *ſervant*; but

but when *Sarah* gives her into *Abraham's* bosome, and admits her to share with her self in conjugal priviledges, truly then she begins to justle with her Mistress, and carries her self sawcily to her: Yea, and *Abraham* himself who would not have stuck to have put her away before, yet now he hath taken her into his bed, can hardly perswade his heart to yield to it, till *God* joyns with *Sarah* in the business, bidding him *hearken unto his Wife.* Thus, Christian, use the World as a Servant, which it was made for, and you may go to prayer, as *Abraham* up the Mount, leaving his Servants below; thou shalt find they will not have that power to disturb thee; but let either the profits or pleasures share with Christ in thy conjugal affection, and thou wilt find thy heart loth to send this *Hagar* away, though at the request of Christ himself, when he is calling thee into communion with himself; either use the World as if thou usedst it not, or you will pray as if you pray'd not. The smoak and sparks that rise from a Furnace, are carried that way the wind lies; if thy heart be to the World, thou canst not then keep thy thoughts from driving thither: Then, and not till then, will thy prayer ascend like a Pillar of incense, when there is a holy calmness on thy spirit, and this boisterous wind of inordinate affections to the World be laid. I must not take thee off from diligence in thy worldly Calling, this never spoils a good prayer, only watch thy heart that thou prostitute it not to the wanton embraces of it. That is the pure metall'd Sword or Knife, which bends this way, and that way, but returns to its straitness again, and stands not bent. That heart is of the right make, and hath heavens stamp upon it, which can stoop, and bend to the lowest Action of his worldly Calling, but then returns to his fitness for communion with God, and his heart stands not bent to the creature, but in a direct line to God and his worship.

SECT. II.

STrengthen thy faith on the providence of God for the things of this life. A distrustful heart is ever thoughtful; whatever he is doing, his thoughts will be on that he fears he shall lose When the Merchants adventure is ensured (that whatever comes

he cannot lose much) his heart then is at rest, he can eat his bread with quiet, and sleep without dreaming of shipwracks and Pyrats; while another whose estate is at Sea, and fears what will become on it. Oh! how is this poor man haunted wherever he is going, whatever he is doing, with disquieting thoughts? if he hears the wind but a little loud, he cannot sleep for fear of his ship at sea. Truly thus a soul by faith rould on the promise, will find a happy deliverance from that disturbance, which another is pestered with in prayer; wherefore God in particular directs us to lay this burden from our shoulders on his, when we go to pray, that no by-thoughts arising from these our cares, may disturb us. *Be careful for nothing, but let your requests be made known to God,* Phil. 4. As if he had said, Leave me to take care for your work, and mind you to do mine, if things go amiss in your estates, names, families, I will take the blame, and give you leave to say God was not careful enough of you. When the *Males* of *Israel* went to worship God at *Jerusalem*, that they might not carry distracted minds with them (from the fear of their families left naked behind without a man to fight for them if an enemy should come) God takes the special care of their families in their absence, *Exod.* 34.24. If we have but a faithful servant (who, we believe, will look to our business as carefully as our own selves) this makes us go forth with a free and quiet spirit, and not trouble our selves what is done at home, when we are abroad. Oh! then let us be ashamed if our faith on Gods providence be not much more able to ease us of the burthen of distracting cares.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

The fourth and last cause instanced in, of wandring thoughts in Prayer, with its remedy.

THESE wandring thoughts are occasioned by the Christian's non-observance of his heart in the act of prayer. Let him be at never so much cost of preparatory pains before duty, yet if he doth not watch himself narrowly in the duty it self, his heart will give him the slip, and run into a thousand vanities and impertinencies. The mind of man is a nimble creature; in one moment you shall have it in heaven, and in the very next you shall find it on the earth: Like *Philip*, who being joyn'd to the *Eunuchs Charriot*, on a sudden was carried out of his sight, and found at *Azotas*, a place far distant thence. Thus our hearts are soon gone away from the duty in hand, and taken a vegary to the furthest part of the World in their wild imagination; yea, which is worse, sometimes the mind is off and gadding, but the Christian goes on with his lip-labour, and takes no notice that his thoughts are gone astray: As *Joseph* and *Mary* were gone a days journey before they mist their *child* (who staid behind with other company) Thus the Christian loses his heart in duty, and goes on with a careless formality, that sometimes the prayer is almost done before he observes his hearts seat to be empty, or considers that his soul and spirit hath not borne him company all the way; who, had he but at the first stepping aside of his thoughts, been aware, might have recovered and rescued them out.

4.

out of the hands of thoſe vanities which ſtole them; as *David* did his Wives and Children from the *Amalekites* without any great trouble or loſs. And therefore, Chriſtian, keep thy heart with all diligence, obſerve whether it doth its part in the duty, or be as a ſtring that ſounds not in the conſort. As you do with your children, ſo you had need do with your childiſh mind: haply they wait on you to *Church*, but when you are ſet (if not awed by your eye) they are gone, and may be playing all Sermon time in the fields, and you miſs them not, to prevent which, you ſet them before you, that you may ſee their carriage, and their behaviour. If thou didſt thus pray obſerving and watching thy thoughts where, and what about, thou wouldſt find more compoſure in thy ſpirit, than thou doſt; nay, do not only obſerve thy thoughts in duty, but call them to a review after duty. Many go from prayer too much like boys from ſchool, that think no more of their leſſon, till they return again. Leave praying, and all thoughts how they behaved themſelves in prayer together, for ſhame do not thus. If thou neglecteſt to take account of thy ſelf, conſider that thou muſt give an account both of it, and this thy neglect after it before thy betters; God himſelf will have the full hearing thereof. He ſets not any about a work, of which he means not to take cognizance how it was done: And were it not better that the *Audit* ſhould be in thy more private Court, than thou be call'd to give up thy account at his dreadful Tribunal! Reſolve therefore to commune with thy heart upon this point; and the ſooner thou goeſt about it, the better 'tis like to be done; becauſe then the circumſtances of the action will be freſheſt in thy memory. Go not then out of thy Cloſet, till thou haſt examin'd thy heart; if thy thoughts in prayer ſhall be found to have been in any meaſure free and intire, thy affections warm and lively, matter of joy will ariſe to thee, and thankſgiving to God that thou haſt 'ſcaped the hands of ſo many rovers and free-booters that lay in wait to make prize of thee. But take heed thou applaudſt not thy ſelf for thine own care and circumſpection; alas thou wert not thine own keeper: He that lent his ear to thy prayer, gave thee thy heart to pray, and alſo kept it up in duty: Say rather with *David*, *Who am I, that I ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly?* If thy heart upon the review be found to have plaid the truant, take ſhame, that thou beeſt not put to ſhame before the Lord. Oh! bluſh to think thou ſhouldſt be ſo unfaithful

to

to God and thine own soul, yea so foolish to run up and down on every idle Errand which Satan sends thee, and in the mean while neglect thy own work of so great an importance. The *Spouses* complaint may fit thy mouth, *They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own I have not kept.* He is an unwise Messenger, who being sent to Market to provide food, is drawn by every idle companion to spend both his time and money in vain, and at night comes home without bread for the hungry family. Oh! Christian, was not thy errand to the Throne of grace to get new supplies from heaven for thy poor soul! and doth it not grieve thee to think that now thy soul must pinch, for thy playing away thy praying time and talent, which, as Market-money, was put into thy hand to procure a new store? yea, that thou hast been injurious to thy God by taking his Name in vain? Thou appearedst in a praying posture, thy hand and voice were lift up to heaven, as if thou meantst to pray, but (like him who said he would go into the vineyard, and did not) thou hast turned a contrary way, and set thy thoughts to work in another field; Will not this affect thy heart? Yes surely, and afflict it also, and this affliction of thy spirit will be a soveraign means to excite thy care for the future. The faults which are un-observed, are also un-corrected in the Scholars exercise, and so not like to be mended in the next. Wandring thoughts in prayer, are like vagrants, no such way to rid the Countrey of one, and the heart of the other, as by giving both the Law, the lash I mean.

Quest. *Oh! but saith the Christian, I have used this means, and yet, to the grief of my heart, I am still pestered with them?* Quest.

Answ. Take a few consolatory words to ease thy aking heart that groans under the burden of these thy wandring thoughts. *Answ.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Some Consolatory Considerations for the Christian dejected over-much for wandring thoughts in prayer.

1. THE affliction of thy spirit for them speaks more comfort to thee, than the presence of them discomfort; that thou art annoyed with such troublesome guests, is no more than the best of Saints have found and acknowledged. Wherefore did *David* pray, That *God would unite his heart to fear his Name*, but that he found it gadding? What means *Paul* by his complaint, *When I would do good, evil is present with me*, but that he had not yet got the full Mastery of his unruly thoughts? Thou seest it is no new disease thou art troubled with, but such as is common not only to the sons of men, but the children of God, a spot that may be seen on a Saints Coat; but they being afflicted for them, speaks one of these two things; and both of them have comfort in their mouth for thee. It proves either that they are Satans injections, and not the birth of thine own heart; or if they steam from thy own heart, yet the Spirit of God is the In-dweller, and these but intruders.

First, The moan thou makest for being yoked to such company, is a sign they are rather sent in by Satan, than call'd in by thee; his injections, rather than the suggestions of thine own heart. Our own thoughts commonly are more taking with, and pleasureable to us: The Mother does not more love the fruit of her own body, than we do in the product of our minds. Hence *our own wayes*, words, and thoughts, are call'd our *pleasure*, Isa.

Isa.58.13. and therefore possibly they may be shot from his bow, thy heart being so affrighted at them, and wounded for them. Or

Secondly, If they prove the off-spring of thine own mind, yet thy afflicted soul shews that the Spirit and Grace of God is the In-dweller, and these but intruders and involuntary motions, such as in thy deliberate thoughts thou abhorrest. Were they, as I may so say, of thy own house and family, thou wouldst not shew this zeal to shut the door upon them, or shriek out, when they come in upon thee; the Wife does not cry out when Husband, Children, or Servants, come into the Room, but when Thieves and Cut-throats, from whom she looks for nothing but cruelty; it seems they are neither of thine acquaintance, nor likest thou their company by thy behaviour before them. Be not therefore over-troubled; for Satan if he can but disquiet thy mind with false fears, he hath one part of his errand done for which he sends them; these wicked thoughts are upon no other terms with thee, than holy thoughts are in the wicked; as those profit not them, because not entertain'd; so for the same reason shall not these hurt thee.

2. Know these be the necessary infirmities of thy imperfect state, and so long as thou art faithful to resist and mourn for them, they rather move Gods pity to thee, than wrath against thee. 'Tis one thing for a child employed by his father, willingly or negligently to spoile the work he sets him about; and another, when through natural weakness he fails in the exact doing of it. Should a Master bid his Servant give him a Cup of Wine, and he should willingly throw both Glass and Wine on the ground, he might expect his Masters just displeasure; but if through some unsteadiness (it may be Palsie in his hand) he should, notwithstanding all his care, spill some of it in the bringing, an ingenuous Master will rather pity him for his disease, than be angry for the Wine that is lost; and did God ever give his Servants occasion to think him a hard Master? Hath he not promised, *that he will spare us as a father his child that serves him?* From whence come all the Apologies which he makes for his peoples failings, if not from his merciful heart, interpreting candidly them to proceed rather from their want of skill, than will, power, than desire? *Is not this a brand pluckt up of the fire?* Zech. 4. 'Tis *Christs* Answer in the behalf of *Joshuah* whom Satan accused for his filthy 2.

garments. *The flesh is weak, but the spirit is willing*, Matth. 26. 41. was His favourable gloss for His Disciples drowsiness in prayer.

3. 3. Believers prayers pass a refining before they come into Gods hands. Did he indeed read them with their impertinencies, and take our blotted copy out of our hand, we could not fear too much what the issue might be, but they come under the Correctors hand, our *Lord Jesus* hath the inspection of them, who sets right all our broken requests, and misplaced Petitions, he washes out our blots with his blood, his Mediation is the fine searse through which our prayers are boulted, all that is course and Heterogeneal, He severs from the pure; what is of his own spirits breathing, He presents, and what our fleshly part added, He hides, that it shall not prejudice us or our prayers. This was the sweet Gospel-truth wrapt up in the *Priests bearing the sins of their holy offerings*, Exod. 28. 36.

4. 4. Though the presence of these be a great affliction to thee, yet God will make them of singular use to thee. *First*, To humble thee, and take all glorying from thee, that thou shalt not pride thy self in thy other assistances, which thou wouldst be prone to do, if thy prayer had not this lame foot to humble thee. *Secondly*, To keep thee wakeful and circumspect in thy Christian course. By thy disturbance from these, thou seest the Warre is not yet quite done. The *Canaanite is yet in the Land*; though not Master of the Field, yet skulking in his holes and fastnesses out of which he comes like an Adder in the path, that by these sudden surprizes, and nibbling at thy heel, he may make thee like the Rider, fall backward, and so steal a victory unawares of thee, whom he despairs to overcome in a pitcht Battel by sins more deliberate: And truly, if he dare be so bold as to set upon thee, when in Communion with God (so nigh thy Rock and Castle) doth it not behove thee, Christian, to look about thee, that he gets no greater advantage of thee, when thou art at further distance from him in thy worldly employments? *Thirdly*, God will make thee by these, more merciful to, and less censorious of thy brethren in greater failings.

5. In

5. In thy faithful conflict with them thou may'ſt promiſe thy ſelf, at laſt, victory over them, but expect this gradually to be done, not at once, nor haſtily to be delivered into thy hands. As God ſaid of *Iſraels* enemies. Therefore maintain the fight, faint not at their ſtubborn reſiſtance; pray and mourn that thou canſt pray no better; mourn and fight again; fight and believe them down, though ſometimes they get thee under their feet. God made a promiſe to *Noah* after the flood, in which he gave him a Soveraignty over the creatures. *The fear of you, and the dread of you, ſhall be upon every beaſt of the Earth*, Gen. 9. 2. But we ſee many beaſts are fierce, ſavage, and cruel to mankind; yet thus it is fulfill'd, That none are ſo fierce, and unruly, but by mans Art and induſtry they have been and ſtill are taken and tamed, as the *Apoſtle* hath it, *James* 3. 7. Thus God hath given his Saints, by promiſe, a Soveraignty over ſinne and Satan, *He will ſubdue* both under your feet. The dread of the Saints ſhall fall on the proudeſt Devil, and his foot ſhall be ſet on the neck of his fierceſt luſt, yet this will coſt hot work before the one or other be effected. 5.

CHAP. XVIII.

Satan's Third and last Design upon the Saints Prayer; with the first impediment that may obstruct the acceptation of his prayer in Heaven.

3. THE third and last Design that Satan hath against the Saint in this great undertaking of Prayer, is to hinder his success therein. He will have thee, Christian, (if he can) one way or other, outwards or homewards; and it comes all to one, whether the ship be taken as it go forth, or as it returns home; nay, of the two, it is the greater loss to be Defeated of our expectations, when we look for our Prayers to come richly fraught with mercies from heaven.

Now two ways he labours to hinder the success of prayer.

1. 1. He endeavours to hinder the welcome of their prayers with God, that they may be cast as a Petition out of Court, which God will not look on.

2. 2. If he cannot prevail in this, then he plays an after-game, and will so handle the matter (if possible) that though they have welcome with God, and find gracious reception in heaven, yet, that this be not believed by the Saint on earth, but that he gives them for lost, and looks no more after them. Now though this be not a total and final miscarriage of the prayer, yet the Devil hath hereby a great advantage, depriving him of the present comfort and benefit which his faith might pay him in before a return is made of his prayer.

Sect. I.

SAtan labours to hinder the entertainment of our prayers in heaven. Now our prayers may several ways be stopt at heavens door, and denied that gracious access, which God useth to give. I speak now of Saints prayers; as for the prayers of the wicked, there is one Law for them all, to be cast over the bar, and the door shut upon them. The Tree must be good, before the fruit it bears can taste sweet on God's palate. Now the stoppage which the Saints prayer meets withal, springs not from any unwillingness in God to give out his mercy, or any dislike to have Beggars at his Door. *A Deo placet Deo dare, ut propter hoc omnia creavit, volebat enim habere quæ & quibus dare.* God is so delighted with acts of mercy, that therefore he made the World, and all in it, that he might have Suitors to beg, and Alms to give to those Suitors; but from our selves, we put the stones into the Lock, which hinders the turning of Prayers key in it, and so indeed we shut the door of mercy upon our selves. The Devil himself could not immediately hinder a Saints welcome, he hath not such command of God's ear, did we not put words into his mouth, and help him to a charge against us. The lyes which he, as a false Accuser, carries to God, shall not prejudice us in God's thoughts, or make our prayers the less acceptable; but if the Accusation be true, God will hear it, though he be a wicked spirit that tells the Tale, and we his Dear Children of whom it is told. A father, when he hears of some wicked pranck his Child hath plaid, will chide and frown on him, though it be an enemy that told him of it. Now to instance what miscarriages in a Saint hinder their audience at the Throne of Grace. 1.

Sect. II.

First. WHen the thing prayed for is not according to the Will of God. We have not a liberty to pray at ran- 2.

randome for what we will. The Throne of Grace is not set up that we may come and there vent our sudden distemper'd passions before God, or to make any sawcy motion to him that comes in our head; truly then God should have work enough. If he had promised to sign all our Petitions without any regard to the subject matter of them, he should too oft set his Hand against himself, and pass that away, which would be little for his glory to give. *Herod* was too lavish, when he gave his *Minion* leave to ask what she would, even to half of his Kingdom, and he paid dearly for it; for he gave her that head which was more worth than his whole Kingdom (for the cutting off his head, lost him his Crown.) No, we have to do with a wise God, who, to stop the mouth of all such bold beggars, that would ask what unbeseems us to desire, or him to give, hath given a Law of Prayer, and stinted us to the matter thereof, *When ye pray, say, Our Father*, &c. That is, learn here what you may pray for in faith to receive. 1 *Joh.* 5. 14. *This is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us.* Faith without a promise, is like a foot without any firm ground to stand upon. 'Twas well *Luther* interpreted himself, when he said, *Fiat voluntas mea*, My will be done; *Mea, Domine, quia tua*, My will, Lord, because thine. Now the promise contains this Will of God. Be sure thou gathereſt all thy flowers of prayer out of this Garden, and thou canst not do amiss. But take heed of mingling with them, any wild gourd of thine own. Remember the check our Lord gave his Disciples when venting their Vindictive Passion in their prayer. *Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from Heaven to consume them? And he said, You know not what manner of spirit ye are of*, Luke 9. 54, 55. They had here an example to countenance their Act, but that *Heroicus impetus*, and extraordinary spirit, by which *Elijah* and other of the Prophets were acted, is not our standing Rule for Prayer; that came in them from the Spirit of God, which in us may proceed from the spirit of the Devil, which is implyed in our Saviours question, *You know not what manner of spirit ye are of.* As if he had said, You little think who

who ſtirred you up : You had your Coal not from God's Altar, but from Satan's Furnace. Oh! let us beware that we be not the Devil's Meſſengers, in going to God upon his Errand: Which we do, when we pray againſt the Rule, or without a Warrant. Belch not out thy unruly paſſions of anger there, preſently to have thine enemies confounded (the Diſciples Caſe) nor vent thy intemperate ſorrow through impatience : As *Job* in the Paroxyſme of his trouble begs of God to take away his life in all haſt. Take counſel of the Word, and *let not thy lip be haſty to utter a matter before the Lord.* *Daniel's* Method was the right, *Chapter* 9. 2. Firſt he goes to the Scripture, and ſearches what the mind of God was concerning the time when he had promiſed his people a return out of their captivity, which having found, and learnt thereby how to lay his plea, then away he goes to beſiege the Throne of Grace. *Verſe* 3. *And I ſet my face unto the Lord God, to ſeek by prayer, &c.* Art thou ſick or poor? In want of any temporal mercy? Go, and enquire upon what terms theſe are promiſed, that thy faith may not jet beyond the foundation of the promiſe by a peremptory and abſolute deſire of them, for then thy building will fail, and thou be put to ſhame, becauſe thou askeſt more than God ever promiſed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

The Second thing that may hinder the welcome and acceptation of a Saint's prayer.

2. THough the subject matter of a Saints prayer be bottom'd on the Word, yet if the end he aims at, be not levell'd right, this is a second door at which his prayer will be stopt, though it pass the former. *Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.* Take, I confess, a Christian in his right temper, and he levels at the glory of God, yet as a Needle that is toucht with a Load-stone, may (being shaked) be removed from its beloved point to which Nature hath espoused it, though trembling till it again recovers it: So a gracious soul may in a particular Act and Request vary from this end (being jogg'd by Satan) yea disturb'd by an enemy nearer home, his own unmortified corruption. Truly he is a rare Archer that ever hits this white. Do you not think it possible for a Saint, in distress of body and spirit, to pray for health in the one, and comfort in the other, with too selfish a respect had to his own ease and quiet? Yes sure, and to pray for gifts, and assistance in some eminent service with an eye asquint to his own credit and applause, to pray for a child with too inordinate a desire, that the honour of his house may be built up in him. I know none so season'd grace, as not to be subject to such warpings of spirit: And this may be understood as the sense (in part) of that expression, *Psalm* 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* For though to desire our own health, peace and reputation, be not an iniquity (when con-

contain'd within the banks that God hath set) yet when they over-flow, and are to such a height lift up, as to over-top the glory of God, yea to stand but in a level with it, they are a great abhomination. That which in the first or second degree is wholesome food, would be rank poyson in the fourth or fifth; Therefore (Christian) Catechize thy self before thou prayest, O my soul, what sends thee on this errand! Know but thy own mind, what thou prayest for, and thou mayst soon know Gods mind how thou shalt speed. Secure God his glory, and thou mayst carry away the mercy with thee. Had *Adonijah* askt *Abishag* out of love to her person, and not rather out of love to the Crown, 'tis like *Solomon* would not have deny'd the banes between them, but this wise *Prince* observed his drift to make her but a step to his getting into the Throne which he ambitiously thirsted for, and therefore his request was deny'd with so much disdain. Look that when thy Petition is Loyal, there be not Treason in thy end and aim; if there be, He will find it out.

Quest. *When shall I know that I aim at God or self in prayer?* Quest.

Answ. This will commonly appear by the posture of our heart, when God delays, or denies the thing we pray for. A soul that can acquiesce, and patiently bear a delay or denial (I speak now of such mercies as are of an inferiour nature, not necessary to salvation, and so not absolutely promised) gives a hopeful testimony, that the glory of God weighs more in his thoughts, than his own private interest, or accommodation. A selfish heart is both peremptory and hasty; it must have the thing it cries for, and that quickly too, or else it faints or chides, falls down in a swoon, or breaks out into murmuring complaints, not sparing to fall foul on the promises and Attributes of God himself. *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?* Isa.58. 3. Now from whence come both these, but from an over-valuing of our selves? which makes us clash with Gods glory, that may be more advanced by these delays and denials, than if we had the thing we so earnestly desire. God was more glorified in denying Christ himself his life, than if he had let that bitter Cup pass without his tasting of it, which Christ (*John* 12. 28.) understanding fully, resign'd himself thereunto, saying, *Father, glorifie thy self; not* *Answ.*

my Will, but thy Will be done. As if he had said, I would not save my life, to lose thee the least of thy glory: This is the Copy we should all write after. Indeed if our distempered hearts be so wilful and hasty, as not to be content with what, and that when it pleaseth God also, he should not love us in gratifying such desires, for thereby he would but nourish our distemper, which is better cured by starving, than feeding it.

CHAP. XX.

Containes the Third and Fourth Block that may lie in the way of a Saints prayer.

3. THE Christians prayer may miscarry, when with his prayer he joyns not a diligent use of the means: We must not think to lie upon God, as some lazy people do on their rich kindred; to be always begging of him, but not put forth our hand to work in the use of means. God hath appointed prayer as a help to our diligence, not as a Cloak for our sloth. Idle Beggars are welcome neither to Gods door nor mans. What! wilt thou lift up thy hands to God in prayer, and then put them in thy Pocket! Doth not God forbid our charity to him that worketh not? *We commanded you, if any would not work, neither should he eat*, 2 Thess. 3. 10. And will he encourage that idleness in thee, which he would have punished by us? 'Tis a good gloss of *Bernard* upon that of *Jeremiah*, *Lament.* 3.41. *Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the Heavens.* *Qui orat & laborat, ille cor levat ad Deum cum manibus.* He that prayeth, and is diligent in the use of means, is the person that lifts up his heart with his hands to God. Look therefore, Christian, thou mingleſt thy sweat with thy tears, thy labour with thy prayers. If thy

prayer

prayer doth not ſet thee on work, neither will it ſet thy God at work for thee. Is it a luſt thou art praying againſt? And doſt thou ſit down idle to ſee whether it will now die alone? Will that prayer ſlay one luſt, that lets another (thy ſloth I mean) live under its noſe? As God will not ſave thy ſoul, ſo neither will he deſtroy thy ſin, unleſs thy hand alſo be put to the work. See how God raiſed *Joſhuah* from off the earth, where he lay praying and mourning for *Iſraels* defeat, *Joſh.* 7. 10. *Get thee up, wherefore lieſt thou upon thy face? Iſrael hath ſinned, &c.* Verſe 12. *Therefore the children of Iſrael could not ſtand before their enemies, &c.* Ver. 13. *Up, ſanctifie the people.* Oh how oft may God rouſe us up from our knees, and ſay, Why lie ye here with your lazy prayers! you have ſinned in not taking my counſel, and obeying my Orders; I bade you watch, as well as pray; why do you not one, as well as the other? My command obliges you to flie from the ſnare that Satan lays for you, as well as pray againſt it: therefore it is you cannot ſtand before your luſts. *Moſes* durſt not go to God with a prayer in behalf of ſinning *Iſrael*, till he had ſhewn his zeal for God againſt their ſin, and then he goes and ſpeeds: See *Exodus* 32. 25. compared with *Verſe* 31. Doſt think to walk looſely all day, yielding thy ſelf, and betraying the glory of God into the hands of thy luſt, and then mend all with a prayer at night? Alas thy cowardize and ſloth will get to heaven before thy prayer, and put thee to ſhame, when thou comeſt on ſuch an errand.

Fourthly, The Saints prayer may miſcarry from ſome ſecret grudge that is lodged in his heart againſt his brother. Anger and Wrath are ſtrange Fire to put to our incenſe. 'Tis a Law writ upon every Gate of Gods houſe (every Ordinance I mean) at which we are to enter into Communion with God, that we muſt *Love our Brethren.* When we go to hear the Word, what is the Caveat, but that we ſhould *lay aſide all malice, envy, and evil-ſpeaking, and as new-born babes, deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word.* The Goſpel will not ſpeak peace to a wrathful ſpirit: Anger and malice, like a ſalt corroding humour in the ſtomack, makes us puke and caſt up the Milk of the Word, that it cannot ſtay with us for nouriſhment. Is it the Goſpel-Supper thou ſitſt at? this is a love-feaſt; and though it may be eaten with the bitter herbs of ſins ſorrow, yet not with the ſour leven of wrath 4.

and malice, 1 *Cor.* 11. 18. *When ye come together in the Church, I hear that there be divisions among you*, &c. Now mark what follows, *Verse* 20. *This is not to eat the Lords Supper.* Christ will not communicate with a wrangling jangling company. When such Guests come, he riseth from his own Table, as *Davids* children did from *Absaloms*, upon the Murder of their brother *Amnon*, 1 *Sam.* 13. 29. And for prayer, you know the Law thereof, *Lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting*, 1 Tim. 2. 8. implying, that 'tis impossible to pray in faith and in wrath. *Duobus modis oratio impeditur, si ad huc homo mala committit aut si committenti in se ex toto corde non dimittit.* Our prayer may be hindred two wayes; By lying in any sin we commit against God: Or in wrath, by not forgiving our brothers committed against us. Those two in our *Lords Prayer*, cannot be divorced; *Forgive us, as We forgive.* This is that *ferrum in vulnere* (as the same *Father* hath it) which makes our prayers as uneffectual to us, as the Plaister is to the wound in which the Bullet still remains.

Now the reason why God is so curious in this point, is, because Himself is so gracious; and He being *Love*, can bid none welcome that are not *in love*. The *Heathens* had such a notion, that the *gods* would not like the Sacrifice and Service of any, but such as were like themselves. And therefore to the Sacrifices of *Hercules*, none were to be admitted that were *Dwarfs*. To the Sacrifice of *Bacchus*, *a merry god*, none that were sad and pensive, as not suiting their genious. An excellent truth may be drawn from this their folly. He that would like and please God, must be like to God. Now our God is a God of peace; Our heavenly Father merciful; and therefore to him none can have friendly access, but those that are children of peace, and merciful as their Father is. Oh! watch then thy heart, that Satan's Fire-Balls (which upon every little occasion he will be throwing in at thy Window) take not hold of thy spirit, to kindle any heart-burning in thee against thy brother. If at any time thou seest the least smoak, or smellest the least scent of this fire in thy bosome, sleep not till thou hast quencht it; be more careful to lay this fire in thy heart aside, when thou goest to bed, than the other that is on thy Hearth. How canst thou by prayer commit thy self into Gods hands that night, wherein thou carriest a spark thereof

thereof ſmoothered in thy breaſt? *Iraſci, hominis, iram non perficere, Chriſtiani eſt.* Jerome. As a frail man thou canſt not hinder, but ſuch a ſpark may light on thee, yet if thou wilt prove thy ſelf a Chriſtian, thou muſt quench it. Nay more, if thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf a Chriſtian, and have thy prayer find Gods ear or heart open to it, thou muſt do thy utmoſt to quench it in thy brothers heart, as well as thy own. It is not enough that thou carrieſt peace in thy heart to him, except thou endeavoureſt, that he may be at peace with thee alſo. *Matth.* 5. 23. *If thou bring thy gift to the Altar, and there remembreſt thy brother hath ought againſt thee, &c. Hierome* brings in the Chriſtian here expoſtulating his cauſe with God, why he will not hear his prayer, *Domine, quare nonvis ſuſcipere munus meum? quid ad me attinet? non eſt in meâ poteſtate, ſi Frater meus habet aliquid contra me. What is it to me (Lord) that my brother is offended with me? I cannot help that; Wilt thou not receive my gift for his fault?* To whom he brings *God* thus anſwering: *Et quid dicis male ſerve? Intelligo animum tuum? Nihil habes? Amas eum? Quare ergo ſalvare eum nonvis? Vade, roga eum, ns ille contra te habeat ut ſalvari poſſit. What is it naughty ſervant that thou ſayeſt? I underſtand thy meaning? What is it to thee? Haſt thou nothing againſt him? Doſt thou love him? Wherefore then wouldſt not thou ſave his ſoul? Go and beg of him to be at peace with thee, that thy Brothers ſoul may be ſaved.* I ſpeak the more of this particular, being ſenſible what *an hour*, or rather *Age of* temptation we live in, by reaſon of the ſad differences of judgment among Chriſtians, which have diſtil'd upon their affections ſo great a diſtaſte one to another, as exulcerates them into wrath and bitterneſs; yea, a wonderful cure it will be, if it can be prevented from ending in an irrecoverable conſumption of love among a great part of this preſent generation: Eſpecially conſidering what malignity is dropt into theſe *Church*-contentions by thoſe *National* diviſions alſo that have fallen in with them, or rather ſprung from them, and which drew ſo ſad a Sword among us, as for many years could find no other ſheath but the Bowels of this then miſerable Nation. Oh what grudges, animoſities, and heart-burnings have theſe two produced? The Sword (bleſſed be God) is at laſt got into its Scabbard of peace; but have we not cauſe to wiſh that it had

been

been cleaner wiped when put up, and not ſuch an implacable ſpirit of revenge and malice to be found remaining among many of us, as alas is too common to be met with every where? The ſtorm without us is over (bleſſed be God) but is it not too high within ſome of our breaſts? The flood of National calamities is aſſwaged, but now the Tide is down and gone, is there not a deal of this filth (to name no other) uncharitable jealouſies, bitterneſs, wrath and revenge, left behind upon our hearts? enough to breed another plague and judgment among us, if a flood of National Repentance does not waſh away what the Sea of Warre and other Confuſions have caſt up. But if this were all the miſchief they are like to do us, our caſe is ſad enough; they will hinder our prayers; for God will not accept ſuch ſacrifices as are kindled with the fire of wrath.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains the fourth cauſe of a Saints prayer miſcarrying (want of faith, as alſo what to pray in faith imports.)

5. 5. THE Chriſtians prayer may miſcarry for want of faith. Prayer is the Bow, the Promiſe is the Arrow, and Faith the Hand which draws the Bow, and ſends this Arrow with the Hearts meſſage to heaven. The Bow without the Arrow, is of no uſe, and the Arrow without the Bow, as little worth; and both without the ſtrength of the Hand, to no purpoſe. Neither the Promiſe without Prayer, nor prayer without the Promiſe, nor both without Faith, avails the Chriſtian any thing. So that what was ſaid of the *Iſraelites, that they could not enter Canaan becauſe of unbelief*, the ſame may be ſaid of many of our payers, they cannot enter heaven with acceptation, be-

becauſe they are not put up in faith. Now faith may be conſidered with a reſpect to the perſon praying, or to the prayer put up. *Firſt*, The perſon muſt be a believer, but this is not enough: There muſt be an act of faith exerted in the prayer, as well as the habit of faith dwelling in the perſon. *Mark* 11. 24. *What things ſoever ye deſire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye ſhall have them.* If the thing be not to be found in the promiſe that we deſire, 'tis a ſin to pray for it; if it be, 'tis a ſin not to believe, when we pray for it, and that no ſmall one, becauſe thereby, we both prophane an Ordinance, and aſperſe the Name of the great God.

SECT. I.

Queſt. *Anſw.* 1.

Qu. *But what is it to pray in faith?*

Anſw. 1. *Firſt, Negatively.* It is not believe that the very thing *in ſpecie*, or in its proper kind that we pray for, ſhall be always given. Chriſt prayed in faith, and was heard, *Hebr.* 5. He believed not the thing in kind to be given, neither was it, yet his prayer was anſwered; therefore be ſure thou learneſt the right method of acting thy faith in prayer, which muſt be taken from the nature of the promiſe thou putt'ſt in ſuit. As water receives its figure (round or ſquare) from the Veſſel it is poured into: So our faith is to be ſhaped by the promiſe, if that be abſolute (as things neceſſary to ſalvation are) then thy faith may expect the very thing promiſed; if otherwiſe, then thou art not to limit thy faith to the thing its ſelf, but expect money or money-worth; health, or as good as health; deliverance, or better than deliverance. An abſolute faith on a conditional promiſe (without an immediate Revelation, which we muſt not look for) is fancy, not faith; to commit a ſin, not act a grace, this is to be free on Gods Purſe without a Grant; for we put more in the concluſion of our faith, than is in the premiſes of the promiſe; and this is as bad Divinity as Logick.

SECT.

Sect. II.

2. *Secondly. Positively.* To pray in faith, is to ask of God in the Name of Christ, what he hath promised, relying on his power and truth for performance, without binding him up to time, manner, or means.

1. *First*, We must ask what God hath promised, or else we chuse for our selves, and not beg; we subject Gods Will to ours, and not ours to his; we forge a Bond, and then claim it as debt, which is a horrible presumption! He that is his own promiser, must be his own Pay-Master.

2. *Secondly*, To pray in faith, is required that we pray in *Christs Name*; as there can be no faith but on a promise, so no promise can be claim'd but in his Name, because they are all both made to him, and performed for him. They are made to him, the Covenant being struck with him: *Titus* 1. 2. *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lye, promised before the world began.* And there was none then existing but Christ to whom the promise could be made: So that as the Child claims his estate in right of his father that purchased it: So we come to our right in the promise, as Heirs of, and co-heirs with Christ. And as the promise was made to him, so it is performed for him, because his Blood shed was the Condition of the Obligation upon which God acknowledged the debt to Christ, and bound himself to perform all the Articles of the Covenant to his Heirs orderly claiming them at his hands in his Name. 'Tis not therefore enough boldly to urge God with a promise; *Pardon, Lord, for thou hast promised it; grace and glory, for thou hast promised them*; but we must, if we mean to lay our plea legally (I mean according to the Law of faith) plead for these under the protection of his Name. Thus *Daniel, Chap.* 9. 17. that holy man, laid the stress of his prayer on Christ: *Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lords sake.*

SECT.

SECT. III.

Thirdly. TO this praying in faith is required a relying on God, through Christ, for a gracious answer. Let the former be done, and the creature fail in this, he prays not in faith, but takes the Name of God and Christ in vain. This act of relying is the taking hold on God in prayer, *Isa.*64. When Mariners, in a storm, cast out their Anchor, and it comes home again without taking hold on the firm ground (so as to stay the ship, and bear it up against the violence of the Waves, it gives them no help: So neither doth a handless prayer that takes no hold on God. Therefore you shall find that when a Christian speeds well in prayer, his happy success is attributed not to naked prayer, but as cloathed and impowered with this act of recombency upon God. 2 *Chron.* 13. 14. *They cried unto the Lord:* Now see *verse* 18. *The children of Judah prevailed because they relied upon the Lord God of their Fathers.* He doth but lye in prayer, that doth not relie on God after praying. What he seems to give with one hand to God, he takes from him with another, which is no better than a mocking of God. By praying, we pretend to expect good from him; by not relying, we blot this out, and declare we look for no such matter. 3.

Now this relyance of the soul, hath a twofold way whereby it fastens on God like the Anchors double hook.

First, It takes hold on the power of God; thus Christ in his Agony, *Hebr.* 5. 7. *offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death.* In prayer we open our case to God, declare how sinful, weak, shiftless creatures we are, and then we commit our cause to God. Now as none will put that to anothers keeping, which he thinks safe in his own hands; so neither will any deliver it to another, of whose ability he is not first perswaded to effect that which himself is unable to do. See *Eliphaz* his counsel to *Job*; *Chap.* 5. 8. *I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:* As if he had said, If I were in your case, I will tell you what course I would take, I would not look this way, or that, but speedily hast me to the Throne of grace, and when once 1.

I had told God my very heart, I would trouble my self no more, but commit my cause to him, and discharge my heart of the burden of all its troublesome thoughts: But under what notion would he do all this? The next words will tell us, *Unto God would I commit my cause, which does great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number.* First he would bottom his faith on God as able to do great things, and then leaving his request lodg'd in the arms of such power, he doubted not but he should cast all care away, and enjoy the serenity of his mind, whatever his condition was. Indeed this is the first stone Faith lays in her building. And an errour in the foundation, will make the whole house stand weak. Be sure, therefore, thou layest this bottome stone with thy greatest care. Oh! how unbecoming is it to have a great God, and a little faith on this great God! A strong God, and a weak faith on his Almighty power! Unbelief here ravisheth and offereth violence to the very light of Nature: For, *his eternal Power and Godhead are known by the visible things of the Creation*, Rom. 1. What is not he able to do, that could make so goodly a Fabrick without Materials, Tools, or Workmen! *Crucifige illud verbum, potest ne!* Away with that question which so grates the ears of the Almighty; Can he pardon? Can he purge? What cannot he do, that can do what he will!

2. Secondly, It takes hold on the faithfulness of God to perform the promise: We are directed, in committing our selves to him, to eye his faithfulness; *As unto a faithful Creator*, 1 Pet. 4. 19. The Saints faith hath been remarkable in staying themselves on this, while yet the mercy they prayed for, lay asleep in its causes: *Psal.* 65. 1. *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion; and unto thee shall the vow be performed.* See, he stands with his Instrument strung, and tuned, ready to strike up, and bring God in with the Musick of his praise when he shall come with an Answer to his prayer, not the least doubting but that he shall use it upon that joyful occasion; for he speaks without Ifs and Ands: *Unto thee shall the vow be performed, O thou that hearest prayer!* And yet that good day was not come; for even then he cries out, *Iniquities prevail against me!* So *Psal.* 140. 12. *I know the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.* Why? how comes he so confident? *Ver.* 12. *Sure-*

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ly the righteous shall give thanks to thy Name. As if he had said, Thou hast a Name for a gracious and faithful God in thy promise, and this thou wilt never suffer to be blotted by failing thy Word: (Christian) thou mayst venture all thou art worth on the publick faith of Heaven; *His words are pure, as silver tried seven times in a Furnace.* He that will not suffer a Lyar, or Covenant-breaker, to set foot on his holy Hill, will much less suffer any one thought of falseness or unfaithfulness to enter into his own most holy heart.

CHAP. XXII.

Four Rules whereby we may know whether we act faith in prayer or no.

BUT how may I know when I thus act faith in prayer? Quest.

First, By the serenity and composure of thy spirit after prayer. Faith may live in a storm, but it will not suffer a storm to live in it. As Faith rises, so the blustring wind of discontented troublesome thoughts go down. In the same proportion that there is faith in the heart, there is peace also; they are joyn'd together, *Quietness and Confidence*, Isa. 30. 15. *In returning shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength*; therefore call'd *peace in believing*, Rom. 15. 13. Even where 'tis weakest, it will not let the unquietness of the heart pass without a chiding. *Psal.* 42. *Why art thou disquieted, O my soul! trust still in God.* What! Soul! no sooner off thy knees, but clamorous! Hast not thou made thy moan to a God able to help thee, and will not that ease thee! Faith disburdens the soul in prayer of that which oppresses it: Whereas the unbelieving *Answ.* 1.

soul still carries about it the cause of its trouble, because it had not strength to cast forth its sorrows, and roul its cares upon God in the duty. Christian, dost thou carry away the same burden on thy back from prayer, which thou didst bring to it? surely thou didst want faith to lift it off thy shoulder. Had Faith been there, and that been active and lively, it would have bestowed this elsewhere, and brought thee away with a light heart: As *Hannah*, who rose from praying *to eat, and her countenance was no more sad.* And as Christ who kneeled down with as sorrowful a heart, as ever any, but comes off with a holy courage to go and meet his approaching death, and his bloody enemies now on the way to attach him. *Arise* (saith he to his Disciples) *let us be going, behold he is at hand that doth betray me*, Mat. 26. May it not put us to the blush to think, that we should come less satisfied from Gods presence, than we do sometimes from a sorry man? If you were poor, and had a rich friend that bids you send your children to him, and he will provide for them; would not this ease your mind of all your cares and distracting thoughts concerning their maintenance? And doth not God promise more than this comes to, when he bids us *be careful for nothing, but let your requests be made known to God with thanksgiving.*

2. Secondly, Dost thou continue praying even when God continues to deny? An unbelieving heart may have some mettal at hand, but will be sure to Jade in a long journey. Faith will throw in the Net of Prayer again, and again, as long as God commands, and the Promise encourageth. The Grey-hound hunts by sight; when he cannot see his Game, he gives over running; but the true Hound by scent; he hunts over hedge and ditch though he sees not the Hare he pursues all the day long. An unbelieving heart may be is drawn out upon some visible probabilities, and sensible hopes of a mercy coming, to pray, but when these are out of sight, his heart fails him; but Faith keeps the scent of the Promise, and gives not over the chase.

3. Thirdly, Dost thou stint God, or canst thou trust him to Answer thy prayer in his own way without thy prescription? When we deal with a man, whose ability or faithfulness we have in doubt, then we labour to make sure of him by tying him up to our terms: but if we stand assured of their power and truth, we leave them

them to themselves. Thus the Patient sends for the Physician, desires his help, but leaves him to write his own Bill. The Merchant sends over his goods to his Factor, and relies on him to make such returns, as his wisdom tells him will come to the best Market. Thus the believing soul, when he hath opened his heart to God in prayer, resigns himself to the goodness, wisdom and faithfulness of God to return an Answer: *Remember me, O God* (said *Nehemiah*) *concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy*, *Chap.* 13.22. See here, this good man makes bold to be Gods Remembrancer, but dares not be his Counsellour or Prescriber; he remits the shaping of the answer *to the greatness of his mercy.* Hence it follows, that whatever way God cometh in, the believing soul bids him welcome. Doth he pray for health, and miss of that? yet he blesseth God for support under sickness. Doth he pray for his children, and they notwithstanding prove a cross? yet he finds an answer another way, and satisfies himself with it: After many a prayer that *David* had put up no doubt for his Family, we find him entertaining an Answer to those prayers with a composed spirit, though they came not in at the fore-door (by having the mercy in the Letter) 2 *Sam.* 23.5. *Though my house be not so, yet God hath made a Covenant with me, &c.* and this he tells us, *is all his desire.* Indeed a believer cannot miss his desires, *Psalm* 145. *He will fulfill the desires of those that fear him.* Because they disown those desires which clash with Gods Will. Who could pray more fervently for their children, than *Job* did for his? He was with God for them every day; but after all his Religious care of them, he meets with heavy tydings, and hears them to be made a sacrifice by death, for whom he had offered up so many sacrifices to God; yet doth he not foolishly charge God, or say it was in vain that he pray'd: No, that Ointment was not lost, the savour whereof was poured into his own soul, from the posture of which he might read a gracious Answer, in the supporting grace that enabled him to love and bless God over the Grave-stone of his slain children.

Fourthly, By the souls comporting it self towards the means 4.
used for obtaining the mercy prayed for.

First, If thou prayedst in Faith, it will set thee to use other 1.
means besides prayer. Mark how the *Apostle* joyns these to-

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gether, *Rom.* 12. 11, 12. *Not ſlothful in buſineſs, fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord, continuing inſtant in prayer.* As faith uſeth her wings of prayer to fly to heaven, ſo ſhe uſeth her feet of duty and obedience with which ſhe walks and beſtirs her ſelf on earth.

2. Secondly, Faith will make thee, as uſe means, ſo to be choice of the means thou uſeſt for the obtaining what thou beſpeakeſt of God in prayer. Faith is a working grace, but it will be ſet on work by none but God. Am I in Gods way, ſaith Faith? Is this the means he hath appointed? If it be not, away he turns from it, diſdaining to work with any of the Devils tools. God can Anſwer my prayer, ſaith the Believer, without the help of my ſin. If riches be good for me, I need not be at the coſt to purchaſe them with a Lye or a Cheat. If health be a mercy, he can ſend me it, though I adviſe not with the Devil's Doctors. If joy and comfort, there is no need to take down the Devil's Muſick. If times be evil, he can hide me; without running under the skirt of this great man, and that, by baſe flattery and diſſimulation. When *Ezra* had committed himſelf and his compāny to God (now on their march towards *Jeruſalem*) by a ſolemn day of Faſting and Prayer, and had made a holy boaſt of his God, what he would do for them that ſeek him; he thought it both unbeſeeming his profeſſed faith, and alſo diſhonourable to his God, whom he had ſo magnified in the hearing of the *Perſian King*, to beg any Armed Troops for a Convoy to them in their way, leſt his faith ſhould be brought into ſuſpicion for an empty bravado, and groundleſs confidence; *Chap.* 8. 22. *I was aſhamed to require of the King a band of Souldiers and Horſemen to help us againſt the enemy in the way, becauſe we ſpake unto the King, ſaying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that ſeek Him.*

3. Thirdly, If thou acteſt faith in prayer, thy faith will make thee not only choice of the means thou uſeſt, but curious and careful in uſing the means that God chuſeth for thee. Thou wilt be afraid leſt it ſhould ſtand in Gods light, by ſtealing thy confidence from him to truſt in it. Faith will teach thee to uſe means as Gods Ordinance, but rely on God to bleſs it. While Faiths hand is on the Plough, her eye is in Heaven; *Annus non ager facit fructum:* The influences of Heaven, not the Tillage of the Huſband,

band, make it a fruitful year. Sometimes the Phyſician appoints a powder to be taken in Wine or Beer: Now 'tis not the Beer or Wine that does the cure, but the powder, which they are only uſed to convey and carry into the ſtomack. Thus mercy is handed over to us by the bleſſing of God in the uſe of means, yet think not the means do it, but the bleſſing of God mingled with it, and infuſed into it.

Fourthly, and laſtly, If thou acteſt faith in prayer, as thou 4.
wilt be careful to improve means when God provides them, ſo thou wilt not ſuſpend thy faith, when God denyes them. The believing ſoul dares not truſt to the means when he hath them, therefore he dares not diſtruſt God when he wants them. Faith knows though God uſeth means, yet he needs none. The Sun and ſhowers are the means he uſeth for the growth of the graſs and herbs; yet he made theſe to grow out of the earth *Gen.*1.11. before there was Sun or rain. Ploughing and ſowing is the ordinary means whereby man is provided with bread: But he fed *Iſrael* with bread without their pains and husbandry. Ships, the means to waft us over the Seas: But God carried *Iſrael* through the Red Sea without ſhip or boat. May be times are hard, and thou art poor; thy charge is great, and thy comings in little, with the Widow in the Prophet, thou art making thy laſt Cake of the little meal that is left, to reaſon and ſence thou muſt either beg, ſteal, or die. Canſt thou now upon praying to thy God, wait upon his promiſe which tells thee, *Verily, thou ſhalt be fed?* Pſa.37. And on his providence, which records his care of the Sparrows on purpoſe to aſſure us he will much more provide for his children? or at leaſt doſt thou chide thy heart for its diſtruſtful fears after praying, charging it to hope in God, to whom thou haſt made thy moan? Truly, if thy heart hath not ſome hold on God after duty, to ſtay it, more than before in this thy ſtreight; either thou haſt no faith, or if thou haſt faith, thou didſt not act it in that prayer. True faith will either expell theſe dejections of heart, or at leaſt proteſt againſt them.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

The Second Policy or Stratagem, with which Satan labours to defeat the praying Saint, viz. To buz falſe fears into his ear, that his prayer is not heard.

2. NOW we come to the Second Stratagem that Satan uſeth to hinder the ſucceſs of the Chriſtians prayer (which I call'd a partial hindrance, or miſcarriage thereof) when the prayer it ſelf is not loſt (which comes to paſs only when it finds not acceptance with God) but when the Chriſtian doth not believe on earth, that his prayer is heard in heaven (though indeed it is) and ſo by his queſtioning thereof, he loſeth the Revenue of that preſent peace, which otherwiſe would be paid in unto him from the expectation of its certain return with a joyful Anſwer: As a Merchant that gives his Ship for caſt away, when indeed it is ſafe, and richly laden, (only ſtays for a fair wind) he not knowing or believing this, puts himſelf to as much trouble and ſorrow, as if it were in truth as he feared. Phancy and imagination, even when without ground and reaſon, is able to produce real effects, and ſad conſequences in the minds of men. The falſe news of *Joſeph*'s death, cauſed as much ſorrow to old *Jacob*, yea more, than if he had ſeen him laid out, and had followed him to the grave. The *Jailour* from a fear his Priſoners were gone, and he accountable for them, had foredone himſelf by falling on his own Sword, if *Paul* had not ſeaſonably cried out, *We are all here, do thy ſelf no harm.* And truly our unbelieving fears have no

leſs

leſs power upon our hearts; they rob the Chriſtian of the joy of his life (and man is but a four piece of clay when that is gone) 'tis not praying, but believing prayer is heard, that will make a glad heart, and a chearful countenance. *Hannah* often prayed, ſhe was acquainted with the work many years, yet never had the burden of her ſpirit taken off, till ſhe had faith ſhe ſhould ſpeed: Yea moreover, they weaken the ſpirit of prayer; he that expects little from prayer, will not be much in prayer. That Trade is beſt tended, which 'tis hoped will pay a man beſt for his pains in it. *Who is there among you* (ſaith God) *that would ſhut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on my Altar for nought*, Mal. 1. 11. The Husbandman throws his ſeed freely, becauſe he ſows in hope; and his precioufeſt ſeed on his fatteſt ſoil, becauſe there he looks to find it again with greateſt encreaſe. This made *David* like praying work ſo well, that he will never leave it; *I have prayed, and the Lord hath heard, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* As a Merchant finding his ſweet gain come trouling in, converts his whole eſtate into ſtock: ſo *David* devotes himſelf wholly to prayer, *For my love, they are my adverſaries:* ראבו תפולה, *Pſalm* 109. 2. *But I was prayer.* This was the only weapon I lift up for my defence againſt all their Darts: Whereas unbelief betrays the ſoul unto many uncomely thoughts of God, which reflect ſadly upon his Name, ſo as to weaken his reputation in the creatures thoughts, and bring him either to a diſuſe of this duty, or hopeleſs performance of it; and this Satan loves alife. When a Merchant thinks his goods miſcarry, he grows preſently jealous of his Factor, queſtioning his care, faithfulneſs, or ability to diſpatch his buſineſs; ſuch whiſperings we ſhall hear, if we liſten to our unbelieving hearts ſometimes, when our prayers make not ſo ſhort and quick a Voyage as we deſire. It was a high charge that *Job* brought againſt God (though he lived to ſee he had little reaſon to do it; yea, afterward charged himſelf for charging God) *I cry unto thee, and thou doſt not hear me; I ſtand up, and thou regardeſt me not*, Job 30.20. This holy man was now as deep in Gods books, and as great a favourite with him, as ever, yet ſo far had Satan wound into him, as to make him liſten unto thoſe falſe reports which he brought unto him of God (taking the advantage of his preſent cloudy providence to colour his calumnies) in ſo much that he began to give credit unto this lyar. Now if this may become a ſtone of offence

to a *Job*, how much more mayst thou fear dashing thy foot against it? Let it be thy care to counter-mine Satan in this his spightful plot against God and thee. Surely it should not be a little matter that makes thee throw up thy prayers, and give away so rich an Adventure as thou hast swimming in this bottom. *Esau* hath the brand of a *profane person*, for so cheaply parting with his inheritance; if thou beest a believer, thou art an Heir of Promise, and amongst promises this is not the least, That what thou askest in Christs Name, believing, thou shalt receive. Now if too like his profaneness to part with this piece of thy heritage (which thou canst not do without impeaching the faithfulness of God that gave thee an estate in the promise) We highly commend *Job* for his heroick resolution at another time; *Chap.* 27. 5. *God forbid that I should justifie you; till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me.* How much more shouldst thou say to Satan, God forbid that I should justifie thee thou wicked fiend, or thy false charge against my God, I will hold fast his integrity and faithfulness till I dye. Surely *Daniel*, who ventured his life rather than not pray, would have parted with a thousand lives, rather than have given his prayers for lost, and thereby have blotted the good Name of God, whose faithfulness stands bound to return every prayer of faith with a gracious answer into the Saints bosome.

But the more to fortifie you against this design of Satan, let us inquire into a few of those Arguments with which Satan (abusing the Christians credulity) leads him into this temptation, if not absolutely to conclude, yet unbelievingly to dispute and question it in his heart, whether his prayer be heard or no. I shall reduce them to three head.

1. The first Argument by which he scruples the Christian, and nourishes his unbelieving fears, is taken from those sinful infirmities that cleave to his person and prayer.

2. Secondly, From the deportment of God to him in and after prayer.

3. Thirdly, From the common providence of God, that dispenseth the same things to the wicked without praying, which the Saints receive praying.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

Arms the Saint against Satan's first cavil at his prayers.

1. SATAN makes the Christian out of love with himself and duty, from the sinful infirmities cleaving to both, thereby to quash his hope of any favourable reception that his prayer hath found in Heaven. What! thy stammering prayers make musick in Gods ear! Will the Lord foul his fingers with thy besmeared duties? If thou wert a *Samuel* or *Daniel*, and couldst claim thy place among those Worthies that are Renowned for the Eminent service they have done God in their generation, then thou mightst hope to have the ear of God to thy suit; but thou alas art a puny stripling, a froward child, in whom there is more sin than grace to be found; and dost thou think to be heard? Truly though this Argument weighs little, having no countenance from the tenor of the Covenant, whose priviledges are not impropriated to a few Favourites more eminent in grace than their brethren, but stand open to the whole Family, it being *a common salvation*, and *like precious faith*, that all the Saints partake of; yet is it the great Bug-bear with which many of them are scared. 1.

A word or two therefore to arm thee against it; only this premised (which I must take for granted) that these sinful infirmities are lamented, and not cocker'd by thee (that indeed would turn infirmity into presumption) as also that thou neglectest not to apply the most effectual means for their cure (though as in hereditary diseases) all the Physick thou takest, will not here perfectly rid thee of them. This granted, for thy comfort know,

they are not so offensive to God, as to thy self. Thy prayers pass such a refining in Christs Mediation, that their ill scent is taken away. Doth thy scruple arise from the sinful failings of thy Daily Conversation and Christian course? To remove this, observe how the Spirit of God, when he instanceth in *Elias* as a person whose prayers were exceedingly prevalent with God, doth not describe him by the transcendency of his grace above others, but by his infirmities like unto them? *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not*, Jam. 5.17. As if God should say, Were I so curious in my scrutiny, as you fear, *Elias* his prayer would have been stopt, for he was not without his infirmities. How many failings do we find in *Davids* unseemly carriage before *Achish*, for which he was turned out of the Kings presence under the notion of a Mad-man? yet his prayer at that time, when he betrayed so many unbelieving fears, found favour with God, *Psal.* 34. 4. *I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and deliver'd me from all my fears.* Read the *Title*, and you shall find it, *A Psalm of* David *who changed his behaviour before* Abimelech, *who drove him away, and he departed.* Are they the sinful infirmities which 'scape thee in the duty of prayer? Canst thou find more in any prayer thou putst up, than were in the Disciples for one so short? where they exercised so little faith, that Christ calls it *no faith*, Mark 4. 40. *Why are ye so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?* Yea, they pray to Christ, and chide him in the same breath, *Master, carest thou not that we perish?* Yet Christ could find sincerity hid (like *Saul*) in this stuff of their infirmities, and granted their request. 'Tis true, he rebuked them, but it is as true that he rebuked the wind also. Gods promise for hearing of prayer, shall not be made void by the Saints weakness in prayer: Yea, for thy further comfort, know, that the less power these have to shake or disturb thy spirit in expecting a gracious Answer, the more kindly will God take it at thy hand. *Abraham* (it is said) *believed, not considering his own body, or the deadness of Sarahs womb*; and for this was highly commended, because he thereby did signally glorifie the power of God, to which, he believed their bodily indisposition should not be any obstacle. Truly thus, it will be highly pleasing to God, if thou canst relie, staggering at thy spiri-

ritual indispositions, and that deadness of thy heart which rises up as a great Objection in thy thoughts against the success of thy prayer: For by this, thou givest Christ both the honour of His Death by which he purchased this free access for thy weak prayers to the Throne of Grace, and also of His Intercession which clarifies them from all their sinful mixtures.

CHAP. XXV.

Contains a Three-fold Argument which Satan draws from Gods deportment to the Christian in and after Prayer, to make him question its acceptance.

2. SATAN draws his Argument from Gods deportment to the soul in and after prayer; in which three things he commonly insists upon, by them to create trouble to the Christians thoughts. 2.

First, His silence, which he would have the Christian interpret to be Gods slighting or disregarding of him and his prayer. 1.

Secondly, His frowns, from which he would have him conclude, neither he nor his duty are accepted. 2.

Thirdly, His not giving the mercy in kind; and this he tells the Christian, amounts to a denial. 3.

SECT.

Sect. I.

1. Firſt. His ſilence after prayer. As wicked men ſometimes ſin, and God keeps ſilence, which makes them bold to think God approves of them and their way. So ſometimes a gracious ſoul prayes, and God holds his peace here alſo; and the poor ſoul begins to fear, that neither his perſon nor his duty, are approved of God. Now Satan knowing what thoughts are like to riſe in the Chriſtians own heart, falls in, and joyns iſſue with the Chriſtians boſome-enemy, labouring to confirm him in theſe his unbelieving fears.

To diſentangle and help thee out of this bryar:

1 Firſt, Learn to diſtinguiſh betwixt Gods hearing, and his anſwering the Saints prayer. Every faithful prayer is heard, and makes an acceptable report in Gods ear as ſoon as it is ſhot; but God doth not always thus ſpeedily anſwer it. The father at the reading of his ſons Letter (which comes haply on ſome begging errand) likes the motion, his heart cloſeth with it, and a grant is there paſt; but takes his own time to ſend his diſpatch, and let his ſon know this. Princes have their Books of Remembrance, wherein they write the names of their Favourites whom they intend to preferre, haply ſome years before their gracious purpoſe opens it ſelf to them. *Mordecai's* Name ſtood in *Ahaſhuerus* his Book ſome while before his Honour was conferr'd. Thus God Records the names of his Saints and their prayers. *The Lord hearkned and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, of them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name*, Mal. 3. 16. But they hear not of God in his providential anſwer haply a long time after. *Abraham* prays for a child, and is heard, but how many years interpoſe, before he hath him in his Arms? Truly ſo many, that he goes into *Hagar* (partly by his Wives counſel, and his own weakneſs) to obtain that with a By-blow for which God himſelf had undertaken. Take heed, Chriſtian, thou beeſt not led into this temptation, to queſtion whether God hears thee, becauſe thou hearеſt not from him preſently. Be patient, and thou ſhalt find, the longer a mercy goes before its delivery, the more perfect it will come forth at laſt

God

God give a speedy answer to *Abraham* for his son *Ishmael*, *Oh! that* Ishmael *might live.* *I have heard thee*, saith *God* concerning *Ishmael*, Genes. 17. 20. Indeed he flourished, and spread into a great Nation, before *Isaac*'s stemm almost budded. What a small number was the Family of *Jacob* at their going down into *Egypt?* but when the Date of Gods Bond was near expiring, and the time of the promise grew nigh, then God paid interest for his stay. None gain more at the Throne of Grace, than those who Trade for time, and can forbear the payment of a mercy longest.

Secondly, Consider, when thou findest the deepest silence in Gods providence concerning the thing prayed for, then thou hast a loud answer in the promise. Say not therefore, Who shall ascend to Heaven to bring thee intelligence whether thy prayer hath got safe thither, and had favourable audience in Gods ear? God himself hath saved thee this labour; the promise will satisfie thee, which assures thee, that if it be duely qualified, it cannot find the heart of God shut against it, *The fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much*, Jam. 5. So assured have the Saints been of this, that they before any inkling from providence hath been heard (to bring them the news of a mercy coming) have taken up joy upon the credit of the naked promise, and feasted themselves with the hopes of what they expected, but had not yet received at the cost and charge of Gods faithfulness with which the promise is sealed; *In God will I praise his Word*, Psalm 56. 4. Mark the phrase: He had not as yet the desired mercy, only a word of promise that it should come: Now considering the power and truth of God the Promiser, he is as merry as if he were put in possession of it, and pays his praises before God performs the promise. 2.

Sect. II.

THE second thing which Satan gathers from Gods deportment towards the Christian, thereby to bring the hearing of his prayer into question in his anxious thoughts, is some anger, which seems to sit upon his brow against the Christian. It cannot 2.

be

be denied, but sometimes a dear Saint of God may go away from duty with an aking heart, by reason of the sad impressions of an angry God left upon his spirit. And when thus it fares with the Christian, Satans time is come (he thinks) to lead him into this temptation, by perswading him he may read what entertainment his prayer had at Gods hands in the language of his countenance, and his carriage towards him. If God (saith he) had heard thy prayer, would he handle thee thus? No sure, he would rather have taken thee up into his arms, and kissed thee with the kisses of his mouth, than thus trample thee under his feet. Thou shouldst have had Darts of love shot from his pitiful eye, to intimate the purposes of his grace, and not Arrows headed with his wrath, to stick in thy soul, and thus drink up thy very spirits. Can these be the wounds of a Friend? This the deportment of one that means thee well? This was the temptation which ruffled *Job*'s thoughts, and imbitter'd his spirit, *Chap.* 9.17. He could not believe God answered his prayer, *because he broke him with his tempest.* As if Gods mercy came always in the still voice, and never in the Whirl-wind.

Now in this case take this double word of counsel.

1. First, Enquire whether this Tempest comes to find any *Jonah* in thy ship, whether it takes thee sinning, or soaking in any past sin unrepented; or whether thy conscience diligently listned to, doth witness that thou art sincere in thy course, though compassed with many failings: If it overtakes thee in any run-away voyage with *Jonah*, or rambling course with the *Prodigal* from thy *fathers house*, then indeed thou hast reason to question, yea, 'tis beyond all question, that an acceptable prayer in this posture cannot drop from thy lips. What! run from God, and then send to him thy prayers! This is to desire mercy to spend upon thy lust: But if upon thy faithful search, thou findest this storm overtakes thee in the way of duty and exercise of thy sincerity, like the tempest that met the *Disciples* at Sea (when at Christs command they launched forth) Then be not discouraged; for 'tis ordinary with God, to put on the disguise of an angry countenance; and to use rough language, when his heart is resolved upon ways of mercy, and meditates love to his people. *Jacob*, you know, wrestled hard, and long, before victory enclined to his side. And the Woman of *Canaan* was kicked away like

aDog, with harſh language, who at laſt was owned of Chriſt for a dear child, and ſent away to her hearts content. Sincerity needs fear no ill from God. This very conſideration kept *Job's* head at another time above water, *Job* 16. 12. There we find God taking him by the Neck, ſhaking him as it were to pieces, and ſetting him up for his mark: But *Verſ.* 17. This upheld his troubled ſpirit, that all this befell him walking in the way of obedience; *Not for any injuſtice in my hands, alſo my prayer is pure:* wherefore he rears up his confidence, *Verſ.* 19, 20. *Behold my witneſs is in heaven, and my record on high. My friends ſcorne me, but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.* The holy man was not for all this, ſcared from the Throne of grace, but ſtill looked on God, though with tears in his eyes, expecting good news at laſt, after ſo much bad. And we have warrant to do the ſame, 1 *Joh.* 3. 21. *If our heart condemnes us not, then we have confidence towards God:* And this brings me to the ſecond word of counſel I have to give thee.

Secondly, Enquire whether under theſe frowns from God, there be yet a ſpirit of prayer working in thee. Haply thou canſt not deny but that thy heart is rather ſtirr'd up from theſe to lament after the Lord with more reſtleſs ſighs and groans, to pray with more feeling and fervency, than driven away from duty; This ſpirit of prayer upheld in thee, may aſſure thee of theſe two things. 2.

Firſt, That the cloud of anger which ſeems to ſit on God's brow, is not in his heart. It is but a thin vail, through which thy faith might ſee the working of his bowels towards thee. The preſence of the Spirit of God at work thus in a ſoul, cannot ſtand with his real anger. If his wrath were up, this in thee would be down. Thou ſhouldſt have him ſoon calling back this his Ambaſſadour of peace, at leaſt ſuſpend and withdraw his aſſiſtance. When that ſad breach was made between God and *David in the matter of Uriah*, *Davids* Harp was preſently out of tune, his right hand had forgot its cunning, and the ſpirit of prayer received a ſad damp in his heart. Where is the Pſalm to be found that was penn'd by *David* in that *Interregnum* (as I may ſo ſay) of his grace? I do not ſay he did never pray all the time he lay ſoaking in that ſin; but thoſe prayers were not fit to be joyned with the holy breathings of that Spirit which acted him before his fall,

and after his recovery: And therefore, good man, when by repentance he came to himself, like one recovering out of a dangerous sickness (which had for a time taken away his sences) he begins to feel himself weak, and how much the Spirit of grace was by his sin enfeebled in him, which makes him so vehemently beg, that God would *renew a right Spirit in him, and not take his holy Spirit from him*, Psalm 51. The *Spirit* is so choice and peculiar a mercy, that if thou canst find lively actings of his grace in thee (and where are they more sensibly felt than in prayer, helping the soul to sighs and groans which cannot be uttered?) that thou canst not in reason think God is not friends with thee, though it were at present as dark as Mid-night with thy soul.

2. *Secondly*, It may assure thee that his ear is open to thy cry, when his face is hid from thine eye. For consider but who this Spirit is that thus helps thee in prayer, and furnisheth thee with all thy spiritual Ammunition with which thou so plyest, and batterest the Throne of Grace. Is he not one that knows the mind of God? and that would not have a hand in that Petition which should not be welcome to Heaven? Having therefore this assistance from the Spirit, doubt not thy acceptance with the Father. In a word, the Spirit that helps thee to thy groans and sighs in prayer, is no other than that God thou prayest to, and will God deny himself? This I conceive part, if not the principal part of that Scriptures meaning, *Isa.* 45. 19. *I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain*: That is, when ever I stirre up a soul to pray, and impower him with my Spirit to perform it feelingly, fervently, and after a holy manner, it is always to purpose. God never said thus to any, Seek ye me in vain.

Sect. III.

Thirdly. THE third thing from which Satan takes his advan-
3. tage to breed scruples in the Christians mind concerning the acceptance of his prayer, is the denial of the mercy in kind which is prayed for. We are prone enough to have such thoughts

thoughts our ſelves, and Satan will not be wanting to feed any bad humour that is ſtirring in us. Or if our hearts ſeem pacified with this dealing of God, he hath his ways and wiles to conjure up this evil ſpirit of diſcontent and unbelief. On this errand he ſent *Jobs wife*, to make him think and ſpeak evil of God, *Doſt thou ſtill retain thy integrity?* As if ſhe had ſaid, What, art thou at thy old work? ſtill praying, and praiſing God? Doſt thou not ſee how much he regards thee, or thy ſerving of him? What haſt thou got by all thy devotion? Is not thy eſtate gone? Thy children ſlain and buried in one grave? And thy ſelf left a poor loathſome Cripple? Thy life ſerving for nothing but to make thee feel thy preſent miſery, and feed on thy paſt croſſes. Indeed it requires a good in-ſight into the nature of the promiſes, and the divers ways God takes to fulfill them, to enable us to ſpell an anſwer out of a denial of the thing we pray for; yet ſuch a *good underſtanding have all that do his Commandments*, Pſal. 111. 10. They can clear God, and juſtifie his faithfulneſs in all his dealings, though when he comes to anſwer their prayers, he chooſeth not to enter in at that door which they ſet open in their own thoughts and hopes for him, nor treads in the very ſteps of their expreſs deſires. The whole *Pſalm* contains a teſtimony given to the faithfulneſs of God in his providential works, at which though a carnal curſory eye (from the myſteries hid therein) is ſcandalized, and takes offence, yet the gracious ſoul by his more curious obſervance of, and enquiry into them, finds a ſweet harmony between them and the promiſe, and therefore he concludes, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom; a good underſtanding have all they that do his Commandments. His praiſe endureth for ever.* They having a key to Gods Character, can read the hand of his providence, and ſo are able to praiſe him (knowing him faithful) when others are ready to curſe him. But to help thee out, or keep thee from falling in to this temptation, Thou art in the firſt place to conſider, what mercy it is that God denies thee: Is it not of that ſort of bleſſings which are not neceſſary unto thy happineſs as a Saint? Such all temporal mercies are. The Kingdom of God conſiſts not in meat and drink; Thou wilt find an abſolute denial for no other; he hath bid us take no denial for his love and favour, grace and glory, *Pſalm* 105. 4. *Seek the Lord and his ſtrength; ſeek*

his face evermore. That is, Be not put off for theſe, but live and die at Gods door till he brings this Almes to thee. Well, we will take this for granted. 'Tis a temporal mercy thou art denyed.

Now when thou art tempted to queſtion the love of God, or acceptance of thy prayer, let me deſire thee to weigh this threefold conſideration.

1. Firſt, Conſider how ill God may take this at thy hand, and that in a double reſpect. *Firſt,* That thou doſt ſuſpect his love upon ſo ſlight and trivial a matter, as the temporal enjoyments of this life are; which he thinks have not worth enough to be put into the promiſe any otherwiſe than they are ſubſervient to the ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings of the Covenant; *Matth. 6. Seek firſt the Kingdom of heaven, and theſe things ſhall be added unto you.* That is, as you need them. He caſts them into the other (more grand bleſſings) as a Tradeſman would do thread and Paper, or a skein of ſilk, unto a parcel of rich commodities that a Cuſtomer buys of him. Suppoſe a child ſhould ask his father for money to buy ſome toy or trifle (that pleaſeth his green head) but the father denies him the thing: if now the child ſhould go and make proclamation in the open ſtreet to the diſgrace of his father, that his father did neither love nor regard him (though he wants neither food nor rayment) Would this be well taken at the child's hand? This thou doſt, Chriſtian, in this caſe (though thou thinkeſt not ſo much) And hath not thy heavenly Father more reaſon to queſtion thy love, for taking away his good Name, than thou to ſuſpect his for his denial? But *again,* He may take it ill, that thou haſt aſperſed his wiſdom. Is there no way but this for the wiſe God to ſhew his love, and anſwer thy prayer? Cannot he deny health, and give patience? take away thy eſtate, and turn it into contentation? teaching thee to be abaſed, and to bleſs God thou art made low? He that will make thee ſo happy in heaven, where few of this worlds enjoyments ſhall be ſeen, cannot he make thy life comfortable on earth without ſome of them?

2. Secondly, Conſider how thou prayedſt when thou didſt meet with this denial. Didſt thou pray peremptorily, and abſolutely, or conditionally, with ſubmiſſion to the Will of God? If peremp-

remptorily, thou wert beside the rule, and art the cause why thy prayer came back without its errand. God will not hear, or bear commanding prayers. He that must have a temporal mercy, if he gets it, he may have a spiritual curse, but is sure to have a temporal cross: So *Dalilah* proved to *Sampson*, who would not take his Parents counsel, but must have her whatever comes of it: *Get her me, for she pleaseth me well*, Judges 14. 4. But he paid dearly for his choice. May be such an enjoyment pleaseth thee well, thy carnal heart is in love with it, and that sets thee a praying inordinately for it. Alas, poor creature, if thou hadst it, what wouldst thou do with it? thou wouldst fondly lay thy head in its lap, and let it rock thy grace asleep, and then betray thee into the hand of some sin and judgement! But if thou sayest that thou prayedst with a submissive spirit, on condition it liked God as well as thy self; if so, why then dost thou now recant thy prayer, seeing God hath declared his Will, that it is not good for thee to have thy desire? Wilt thou not be determined by him, to whom thou didst referre thy self? Hast thou not reason to think that God takes the best way for thee? There is never a prayer put up, but God doth as it were weigh and ponder it, and then his love sets his wisdom on work to make such a return, as may be most for his own glory, and his childs good. Now it being the product of such infinite wisdom and love, thou ought'st to acquiesce in it, yea to praise God for it: Thus did *David* in a great strait, *Psalm* 22. *O my God, I cry in the day-time, and thou hearest not.* Well, what hears God from him, now he hears nothing from God (as to the deliverance prayed for?) no murmuring nor caviling at Gods proceedings; Nay, he fears the quite contrary: for he justifies and praises God, *Ver.*3. *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel!*

Thirdly, Observe whether thou canst not gather something 3.
from the manner of Gods denying the thing prayed for, which may sweeten it to thee. Hiply thou shalt find he denies thee, but it is with a smiling countenance, and ushers it in with some expression of grace and favour, that may assure thee, His denial proceeds not from displeasure. As you would do with a dear friend, who, may be, comes to borrow a summe of Money of you; lend it you dare not, because you see plainly, it [illegible]

his good; but in giving him the denial, leſt he ſhould miſinterpret it, as proceeding from want of love and reſpect, you therefore Preface it in with ſome kind language of your hearty affection to him, as that you love him, and therefore deny him, and ſhall be ready to do for him more than that comes to. Thus God ſometimes wraps up his denials in ſuch ſweet ſugered intimations of his love, as prevent all jealouſies from ariſing in the hearts of his people. When *David* was denied to build a Temple for God, as was in his heart to do, God gave him a large teſtimony of his affection, how highly he accepted his good-will therein; though he ſhould not build a Temple for him, yet his deſire was ſo kindly taken, that God would build an houſe for him that ſhould laſt for ever. Thus ſometimes a faithful Miniſter prays earneſtly, that God would bleſs his labours to the converting of his people, and is denied; yet intimations of Gods love to his perſon are dropt, with a promiſe, that however, *his reward is with the Lord*; ſo that his prayer (though denied as to them) is returned with peace into his own boſome. Another prays paſſionately, Oh that he might ſee *Jeruſalem* a quiet habitation, and that Truth and Peace might flouriſh in his days; this may be is not granted, becauſe his deſire antedates the period, which God hath fixed in his purpoſe for the fulfilling of his promiſe to his Church: but he withal, manifeſts his love to him, and expreſſeth how highly he reſents his love to the Church. Thus God did by *Daniel*, to whom an *Angel* was ſent, to let him know what kind entertainment his prayer had, and that he was a man *greatly beloved of God*, Dan. 9. 11. So in temporal mercies, haply thou art pleading with God for deliverance out of this trouble, and that affliction, and it is denied thee, but a meſſage with the denial that recompenſeth it double: May be, ſome ſweet illapſes of his love he drops into thy boſome, or aſſurance of ſeaſonable ſuccours, that ſhall be ſent in to enable thee to charge thorough them with Faith and Victory. So God dealt by *Paul*, *My grace is ſufficient for thee.* I hope now thou wilt not ſay thy prayer is loſt. When *Saul* ſought his fathers Aſſes, was he not ſhrewdly hurt to find a Kingdom inſtead of them? The holy women that went to the Sepulchre to anoint the body of *Jeſus* with their ſpices, did not loſe their labour, though they found him riſen; were they, thinkeſt thou, ſorry for that? What are all the enjoyments of the

the world to the ſpiritual mercies and comfort of the promiſes which thou findeſt in thy attendance on God? not ſo much as the dead body to our riſen Saviour; thou findeſt not ſome dead creature comfort, but thou meet'ſt with embraces from a living God.

CHAP. XXVI.

How to know whether a mercy comes to us by common providence, or as a gracious anſwer to prayer, reſolved.

4. THE fourth and laſt thing that Satan abuſeth the Chriſtian with, to make him doubtful of the acceptance of his prayer, and alſo to queſtion, when a mercy is given in after prayer, Whether it comes as a gracious anſwer to it or no, is this, That the wicked themſelves have many, and thoſe the ſame temporal mercies iſſued out unto them by the hand of common providence without prayer, which he receives that performs this duty. Now, ſaith Satan, How knoweſt thou that thy mercies come to thee as an anſwer of thy prayer, and not at the door of common providence with them? For the extricating thee out of this ſnare, thou muſt know, that we are not to expect extraordinary ways to determine this, but muſt ſatisfie our ſelves with what light the Word of God affords, which is able to reſolve, not only this, but all our caſes of conſcience. 'Tis true, that God doth ſometimes caſt in ſome ſuch circumſtances, as bring an evidence with them, that the mercy flies to us on the wings of prayer. As, when upon *Abrahams ſervants* praying at the *Well* for Gods gracious conduct and help to diſpatch his Maſters buſineſs proſperouſly, that *Rebecca* ſhould preſently 4.

ſently come forth, and by her kind carriage and invitation, ſo fitly anſwer the mould of his prayer, even as the Lock doth the key made for it. Here heaven declared to his very ſenſe, that his prayer found the right way to heaven. When upon prayer the mercy is thus caſt in ſtrangely and ſuddenly without the concurrence of ſecond cauſes, yea when they all lie under a viſible ſentence of death, and the thing is put beyond the activity of their ſphere to work. Here there is no Rival to ſtand in competition with prayer. Thus when the *Apoſtles* healed the ſick upon a ſhort prayer darted up to heaven, not ſo much as a Doctors advice ask'd in the cure. When *Peter* knockt at the door where the *Church* was praying for him, what but prayer bound his Keepers ſenſes ſo faſt in the chains of ſleep, and made thoſe with which *Peter* was bound, to fall off without any kind hand to help, but Heavens? What made the Iron Gate ſo officious to open to him that had no key in his hand to unlock it? Surely we muſt confeſs, Prayer open'd Heaven door, and Heaven, at the Churches prayer, open'd the priſon door. Yet, 'tis as true, that more commonly mercies that are won by prayer, come not with this pomp and obſervation; but, as converting grace, oft ſteals into the hearts of ſome with leſs terrour and noiſe of humiliation, than it doth into others: So truly, do anſwers to prayer (and that more commonly) come with more ſilence, and in the ordinary road by the concurring help of ſecond cauſes. As the Chriſtian praying for the temporal proviſions of this life, God anſwers his prayer by bleſſing his diligence in his Calling. The ſick Chriſtian praying, hath his food and phyſick thereby ſanctified, and ſo recovers. Now, though God hath left himſelf at liberty, either to ſend his mercies by ſecondary hands, or when he pleaſeth to be the Meſſenger himſelf, and bring them in an extraordinary way with his immediate hand; yet hath he not left us at liberty to leave the ordinary road, and neglect the means, under a pretence of expecting extraordinary ways to have our deſires.

Now as to this ordinary way of giving in mercies in anſwer to prayer, theſe two things are to be enquired for.

1. Firſt, Enquire whether thou (who didſt put up the prayer) beeſt in a Covenant-ſtate, when God gives a mercy in anſwer to prayer: He is ſaid *to remember his Covenant*, Pſalm 105.34. com-

compared with *ver.* 8. and *to be mindful of his Covenant*, Psa. 111. 5. His eye is first on the person, taking notice who he is, whether his child or no, and then his ear is open to his cry; *Psalm* 34. 15. *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous; and his ears are open to their cry. Who art thou my son?* said *Isaac* to *Jacob*, before he gave him the blessing. If God sees thou art not his child (and his eyes are not dimm like old *Isaacs* that he can be deceived) thy prayer is not accepted. Indeed neither canst thou in that state pray (in a Gospel sence) nor God graciously bid thy prayer welcome: for the spirit of prayer is a Covenant-grace, and interest in the mediation of Christ a Covenant-priviledge; without both which no prayer is accepted. God hears not any that have not his Spirit to pray in them, and his Son to pray for them; and none have these, but such as are in a Covenant-state.

Secondly, Enquire what thy frame of heart was in the duty of prayer, and also after its performance. Thy not being in a Covenant-state, will prove thy prayer was not heard, and consequently, that the mercy received, came not as a gracious answer to it: But thy being in a Covenant-state, is an insufficient ground for thee to conclude, that this particular prayer that now thou putt'st up is accepted; because there may intervene something to hinder the present benefit of this priviledge which is annext to thy Covenant-state: For, though thy state be good, yet thy present frame and behaviour may be naught. Thou may'st, though a child of God, be under fresh guilt and defilement as yet unrepented of. Now in this case, God can shut his door upon his own child. Thou hast indeed *jus in re*, but not *aptitudinem ad rem.* As a Saint, thou hast a right to all the promises of the Covenant, and to this, of having Gods ear open to thy prayers among the rest; but as thou art a Saint under guilt, or the defilement of any sin that thou hast not yet repented of, thou art not fit to enjoy what thou hast a right to as a Saint. God doth not disinherit thee indeed, but he Sequesters the promise from thee, and the rents of it shall not be paid to thee, till thou renewest thy repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus for the pardon of it. Thy God will chuse a fitter time than this is to signifie his love to thee. The *Leper* under the *Law*, was to stand off, while purified; and so will thy God turn his back of thy prayer, till thou be-

2.

eſt clenſed of thy ſin. *Again*, Suppoſe thou art a Saint, and haſt not thus defiled thy ſelf with any groſs ſin, yet thy graces might not be exerciſed in the duty of prayer; haply thou didſt pray, but no faith or fervency were exerted in it. There may be grace in the heart, but none in the duty; and ſuch a prayer ſhall not ſpeed. The promiſe is to the Saint acting his faith and fervency in prayer, *The fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much*, Jam.5. *Ye ſhall ſeek me, and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your heart*, Jer.29.12. *Laſtly*, Though thou wert ſtirred up in prayer, yet may be thy heart was not raiſed up to relie on God after prayer for an anſwer. Then we pray in faith, when we ſo take hold of God by faith in prayer, as to wait and ſtay our ſelves upon God for a return of mercy from him. Now by putting all theſe together, thou may'ſt come to the reſolution of the Queſtion in hand, if thou beeſt in a Covenant-ſtate, and lieſt not in any known ſin unrepented of; if thou prayeſt fervently, and acteſt faith on God, ſo as to ſtay thy ſoul upon God for an anſwer, though accompanyed with many weakneſſes and ſtaggerings, truly thou may'ſt without preſumption, conclude the mercy which finds thee in this orderly manner waiting upon God, comes as a gracious anſwer to thy prayer. We do not fear to break open a Letter, when we find our name in the ſuperſcription directing it to us. Search the promiſes, and thou ſhalt find them directed by name to thee who prayeſt thus.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

The first importance of [Praying always] shewn to amount to as much as praying in every thing; and why all our affairs and actions are to be encircled within the Duty of Prayer.

HAVING dispatcht the duty of prayer in general, we now come to give an account of the several branches in the Exhortation; which together make up an excellent Directory to the Christian for his better performing of this duty. Indeed the *Apostle* here not only teacheth the Christian how to pray, but the Minister also how to preach, in that he doth not nakedly tell them what is their duty (and so leave them to their own skill in the management of it) but that he may facilitate the duty unto them, he annexeth such directions, and so rules their Copy for them, that they shall not easily miscarry in the performance thereof. That Preacher who presseth a duty (though with never so much zeal) but doth not chalk out the way how it is to be done, is like one that brings a man to a door that is lockt, and bids him go into the house; but gives him no key to open it: Or that sends a company to Sea, but lends them no Chard by which they should steer their course.

But to come to the Directions; they are six.

We shall begin with the first.

First, The time for this duty [*always*] and this hath a threefold importance.

1. *First*, *To pray always*, is as much as if he had said, *Pray in every thing*, according to that of the same *Apostle* in another Epistle, *In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.* Prayer is a Catholick duty, with which like a girdle we are to compass in all our affairs; it is to be as bread and salt on our Table; whatever else we have to our meal, these are not forgot to be set on: Whatever we do, or would have, prayer is necessary, be it small or great: Not as the *Heathen*, who prayed for some things to their gods, and not for other; if poor, they prayed for riches; if sick, for health; but as for the good things of the mind, such as Patience, Contentation, and other vertues, they thought they could carve well enough in these for themselves, without troubling their gods to help them. The Poet it seems was of this mind.

Hoc satis est orare Jovem qui donat & aufert;
Det vitam, det opes, animum mi æquum ipse parabo.

O how proud is ignorance! let God give the less, and man will do the greater.

But their folly is not so much to be wondred at, as the irreligion of many among our selves, who profess to know the true God, and have the light of his Word to direct them what worship to give him. Some are so bruitish in their knowledge, that they hardly pray to God for any thing, others not for every thing. May be they look upon pardon of sin, and salvation of their souls (as fruit on the top-branches of a Tree) out of the reach of their own arm, and therefore now and then put up some slighty prayers to God for them. But as for Temporals, which seem to hang lower, they think they can pluck them by their own industry, without setting up the Ladder of Prayer to come at them. They that should see some, how busie they are in laying their plots, and how seldom in prayer, could not but think they expected their safety from their own policy, and not Gods providence: Or should observe, how hard they work in their shop, and how seldom and lazy they are at prayer for God's blessing on their

their labour in their Closet; they must conclude, these men promise themselves their estates more from their own labour, than the Divine Bounty. In a word, It is some great occasion that must bring many upon their knees before God in prayer: May be, when they have an extraordinary enterprize in hand, wherein they look for strong opposition or great difficulty, in such a case, God shall have them knocking at his door (for now they are at their wits end, and know not how to turn them) but the more ordinary and common actions of their lives, they think they can master at their pleasures, and so pass by Gods door without bespeaking his presence or assistance; thus one runs into his shop, and another into the field, and takes no notice that God is concerned in their employments; if to take a long journey by Sea or Land, where eminent dangers and hazards present themselves unto their thoughts, then God hath their company; but if to stay at home, or walk to and fro in their ordinary employments, they bespeak not the providential wing of God to over-shadow them. This is not to pray always; if thou wilt therefore be a Christian, do not thus part stakes with God, committing the greater transactions of thy life to him, and trust thy self with the less: but *acknowledge God in all thy ways, and lean not to thine own understanding in any*; by this, thou shalt give him the glory of his universal providence, with which he incircles all his creatures, and all their actions: As nothing is too great to be above his power, so nothing too little to be beneath his care, he is the God of the Valleys, as well as of the Mountains. The sparrow on the hedge, and the hair on our head, are cared for by him; and this is no more derogatory to his glorious Majesty, than it was to make them at first. Nay, thou shalt by this not only give God his glory, but secure thy self, for there is no passage in thy whole life so minute and inconsiderable, which (if God should withdraw his care and providence) might not be an occasion of a sin or danger to thee; and that which exposeth thee to these, calls upon thee to engage God for thy defence. *First*, The least passage in thy life may prove an occasion of sin to thee; At what a little Wicket many times a great sin enters, we daily see. *Davids* eye did but casually light on *Bathsheba*, and the good mans foot was presently in the Devils Trap; hast thou not then need to pray, that God would set a guard about thy

ſenſes wherever thou goeſt? and to cry with him, *Keep back mine eyes from beholding vanity.* *Dinah* went but to give her Neighbours, *the daughters of the Land,* a viſit (which was but an ordinary civility) and we may imagine, that ſhe little thought (when ſhe went out) of playing the Strumpet before ſhe came home, yet alas we read how ſhe was defloured: What need then haſt thou before thou goeſt forth, to charge God with the keeping of thee, that ſo thou may'ſt be in his fear from morning till night? *Secondly,* No paſſage of thy life ſo ſmall, wherein thou may'ſt not fall into ſome great danger; how many have been choak't with their food at their own Table? Received their deadly wound by a beam from their own houſe? Knoweſt thou, what will be the end of any action when thou beginneſt it? *Joſeph* was ſent by his father to ſee his brethren in the field, and neither of them thought of a longer journey; yet this proved the ſad occaſion of his captivity in a ſtrange land: *Jobs* ſervants were deſtroyed with lightning from heaven, when they were abroad about their Maſters buſineſs. Where canſt thou be ſafe, if Heavens eye be not on thee? A ſlip of thy foot as thou walkeſt, or a trip of thy Horſe as thou rideſt, may break thy bones, yea thy neck. O! what need then of a God to make thy path plain before thee? It is he that *preſerves man and beaſt;* and canſt thou have faith to expect his protection, when thou haſt not a heart to beſpeak it in thy humble prayers at his hand? What reaſon hath God to take care for thy ſafety, who careſt no more for his Honor?

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The second importance of [*Praying alwayes*] *to pray in all conditions, prosperity and adversity; and why this duty is so to be perform'd.*

2. TO pray always, may import as much, as to pray in all conditions; that is, in prosperity, as well as in adversity: So *Calvin* takes it, *Omni tempore perinde valet, atq; tam prosperis quàm adversis.* Indeed when God doth afflict, he puts an especial season for prayer into our hands; but when he enlargeth our state, he doth not discharge us of the duty, as if we might then lay it aside (as the Traveller doth his Cloak when the weather is warm) Prayer is not a Winter Garment: It is then to be worn indeed, but not to be left off in the Summer of Prosperity; if you would find some at prayer, you must stay till it thunders and lightens; not go to them except it be in a storm or tempest. These are like some birds that are never heard to cry or make a noise, but in or against foul weather. This is not to pray always; not to serve God, but to serve our selves of God; to visit God, not as a friend for love of his company, but as a meer beggar for relief of our present necessity; using prayer as that *Pope* is said to have used Preaching, for a Net to compass in some mercy we want, and when the fish is got, then to throw away the duty. Well Christian, take heed of this; thou hast Arguments enough to keep this duty always on its wheels, let thy condition be what it will. 2.

First,

1. First, Pray in prosperity, that thou may'st speed when thou prayest in adversity; own God now, that he may acknowledge thee then. Shall that friend be welcome to us, that never gives us a visit, but when he comes to borrow? This is a right beggars trick, but not a friends part.

2. Secondly, Pray in prosperity to clear thy self, that thou didst not pray in hypocrisie when thou wert afflicted: One prayer now, will be a better evidence for thy sincerity, than a whole bundle of duties perform'd in adversity: Colours are better discerned and distinguished by day-light, than by the Candle in the night. I am sure the truth and plainness of our hearts in duty, will be best discover'd in Prosperity. In affliction even gracious souls have scruples upon their spirits that they seek themselves; smart and pain, they fear, makes them cry till they remember that their acquaintance with God did not begin in their affliction, but that they took delight in his company before these straits drove them to him.

3. Thirdly, Pray in prosperity, that thou mayst not be insnared by thy prosperity; *Ephraim* and *Manasses* were brethren; and so are plenty and forgetfulness (the signification of their name) Prosperity is no friend to the memory, therefore we are cautioned so much to beware when we are full, lest then we forget God. *Magnus vir est, cui præsens felicitas, & arrisit non irrisit.* Bern. He is a holy man indeed, whose present prosperity doth not mock and abuse him, when it smiles most pleasingly on him. O how hard is it to be pleased with it, and not be ensnared by it! *Strong drink* (*Solomon* saith) *is a mocker*; it soon puts him, that is too bold with it, to shame; Prosperity doth the same. A little of it makes us drunk, and then we know not what we do: This hath proved often an hour of temptation to the best of men. You shall find in Scripture, the Saints have got their saddest falls on the evenest ground. *Noah* (who had seen the whole World drowned in water) no sooner almost was he come safe to shore, but himself is drown'd in Wine. *Davids* heart was fixt in the Wilderness, but his wanton eye rouled and wandred when upon the Terace of his Palace. Health, honour, riches, and pleasures, with the rest of this worlds enjoyments, they are like luscious Wine, we cannot drink little of them they are so sweet to our carnal palate, and we cannot bear much of them, because they

they are ſtrong and heady, fuming up in pride and carnal confidence. Now prayer is an excellent preſervative againſt the evil of this ſtate. *Firſt*, As it ſpiritualizes our joy into thankfulneſs, it is carnal joy that is dreggy, and therefore ſoon putrifies. Now as prayer in affliction refines the Chriſtians ſorrow by breathing it forth in holy groans to God, whereby he is kept from ſinful complaints of God, and murmurings againſt him: Thus here, the Chriſtian by giving a ſpiritual vent to his joy in thankſgiving and praiſes of his God, he is preſerved from the degeneracy of carnal joy, that betrays the ſoul to many foul ſins, if it ſelf be not one: For which purpoſe it is, that the *Apoſtle James* cuts out this twofold channel for this double affection to run in: *Is any afflicted? let him pray: Is any merry? let him ſing Pſalms*, Jam. 5. As if he ſhould ſay, Let the afflicted ſoul pray, that he may not murmure: Let the joyous Saint ſing *Pſalms*, that his joy turns not ſenſual. A carnal heart can eaſily be merry and jocund when he proſpers; the Saint alone is praiſeful. The *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaking of the Mariners deliver'd from ſtorms at Sea (which threatned their wrack) ſaith, *Then they are glad, becauſe they be quiet*, Pſalm 107. 30. But this they may be, and yet not thankful: Wherefore he adds his holy option, *O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs! Secondly*, By prayer the ſoul is led into the acquaintance of higher delights than are to be found in all his temporal enjoyments, and thereby is taken off from an inordinate valuation of them, becauſe he knows where better are to be had. The true reaſon why men are puft up with too high an opinion of worldly felicities, is their ignorance of ſpiritual. *Thirdly*, Prayer is Gods Ordinance to ſanctifie our creature comforts, *Every thing is ſanctified by the word and prayer*, 1 Tim. 4. 5. Now this obtained, the Chriſtian may ſafely drink of theſe ſtreams; the *Unicorn* hath now put in his horn to heal them; Satan ſhall not have ſuch power to corrupt him in the uſe of them, as another that beſpeaks not Gods bleſſing on them. There is a vanity and flatulency in every creature, which if not corrected by prayer, breeds indigeſted humours in him that feeds on it.

Fourthly, In thy proſperity pray, to ſhew thy dependance on God for what thou enjoyeſt: Thou holdſt all thy mercies *in capite*: He that gave thee thy life, holds thy ſoul in life,

Thou hidst thy face (saith *David*) *and I was troubled.* Truly it is time for God to withdraw his hand, when thou goest about to cut off his Title. That enjoyment comes but as a guest, which is not entertained by prayer. *Solomon* tells us of wings that our temporal mercies have; now if any thing can clip these, and keep them from flying away, it is prayer. God would often have destroyed *Israel*, but *Moses* stood in the gap; their mercies were oft upon the wing, but that holy mans prayers stay'd their flight. Gods heart would not serve him to come over the back of his prayer, and put that to shame: No, they shall live, but let them say, *Moses*'s prayer begg'd their life. Now if the prayer of a holy person could prevail for others, and obtain a new Lease for their lives, that were (many of them) none of the best; surely then the prayer of a Saint may have great power with God for his own. Long life is promised to him that honours his earthly father; prayer gives our heavenly Father the greatest honour. If therefore thou wouldst have thy life, or the life of any mercy prolong'd, forget not to pay him this tribute. Yea, would you transmit what God hath blest you with to your Posterity? the best way thou canst take, is to lock thy estate up in Gods hand by prayer. Whatever *Will* thou makest, *God* is sure to be thy *Executor*. Man may propose and purpose, but God disposeth. Engage him, and the care is taken for thy posterity.

5. Fifthly, Pray now, that thou mayst out-live the loss of thy prosperity. When prayer cannot prevail to keep a temporal mercy alive with thee, yet it will have a powerful influence to keep thy heart alive when that dies. Oh it is sad, when a mans estate and comfort are buried in the same grave together! None will bear the loss of an enjoyment so patiently, as he that was exercised in prayer while he had it. When *Job* was in his flourishing estate, his children alive, and all his other enjoyments, then was he a great Trader with God in this duty; *He sanctified his children every day.* He did not bless himself in them, but sought the blessing of God for them; and see how comfortably he *bears* all, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* The more *David* prayed for his child while alive, the fewer tears he shed for it when it was dead.

CHAP. XXIX.

The third importance of [*Praying always*] *to be as much as praying daily; and why we are to pray daily.*

3. TO pray always, *is to pray daily.* When the Christian keeps a constant daily exercise of this duty, Prayer is not a Holy-day, but every-day work: *Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thee for ever and ever*, Psalm 105. 2. This was typified by the *daily sacrifice*, called therefore, *The continual burnt-offering*, Exod. 29. 38. whereby was signified our daily need of seeking mercy at Gods hands through Christ. When our *Lord* taught his Disciples to pray, he bade them not ask bread for a week, no not for a morrow, but for the present day, *Give us this day our daily bread*: plainly signifying our duty, to seek our bread every day of God; which surely was also the end, why God gave the *Manna* in such a portion, as should not stuff their Cup-boards, and furnish them with a store for a month or week, but be a just *demensum*, and sufficient allowance for a day, that so they might be kept in a daily dependance on God, and look up to him daily, who carried the key of their Pantry for them; and have not we the same necessities upon us with them? Our bodies are as weak as theirs, and cannot be preserved without daily repast. Do we not depend on him for the bread of the day, and the rest of the night? And he hath too good an Opinion of his souls constitution, who thinks it can live or thrive with Yesterdays meal, without renew- 3.

ing his communion with God to day. The Mother would think her ſucking child not well, if it ſhould forſake the breaſt a whole day: ſo mayſt thou conclude thy ſoul is not right, that can paſs a day without craving any ſpiritual repaſt in prayer. If thy wants be not ſufficient to keep the Chariot of this duty on its Wheels, yet the ſins which thou daily reneweſt, would drive thee every day to confeſs and beg pardon for them. We are under a Law, *Not to let the Sun go down upon our wrath againſt our brother:* And dare we, who every day deſerve Gods wrath, let the Sun go down, before that Controverſie is taken up between God and us? In a word, Every day hath its new mercies; *His compaſſions fail not; they are new every morning*, Lam. 3. 23. Theſe new mercies contract a new debt, and God hath told us the way of payment, *viz.* a tribute of praiſe: without this, we cannot expect a ſanctified uſe of them. He is branded by all for a prophane perſon, that eats his meat, and gives not thanks: And it would be thought a ridiculous excuſe, ſhould he ſay, He gave thanks Yeſterday, and that ſhould ſerve for this meal alſo. We have more mercies every day to bleſs God for, than what is ſet on our Tables. We wear mercies, we breath mercies, we walk upon mercies, our whole life is but a paſſage from one mercy, to be entertained by another. As one cloth is drawn, another is laid for a new Feaſt to be ſet on. Now, doth God every day anoint our head with freſh Oyl, and ſhall not we Crown him with new praiſes? I will not enter into a diſcourſe, how oft a Chriſtian ſhould in a day pray: At leaſt it muſt be twice, *i. e.* morning and night. Prayer muſt be the key of the morning, and lock of the night. We ſhew not our ſelves Chriſtians, if we do not open our eyes with prayer when we riſe, and ſhut them again with the ſame key when we lie down at night. This anſwers to the *morning and evening ſacrifice* in the *Law*; which yet was ſo commanded, as to leave room for thoſe other free-will offerings which their zeal might prompt them to; pray as oft as you pleaſe beſides, ſo that your devotions juſtle not with the neceſſary duties of your particular Callings; the oftner, the more welcome. We read of *Davids ſeven times a day*; but be ſure thou doſt not retrench and cut God ſhort of thy ſtated hours. *It is a good thing* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) *to give thanks unto the Lord; to ſhew forth thy loving-kindneſs in the morning, and thy faithful-*

fulneſs every night, Pſal. 92. 1, 2. *God* is *Alpha* and *Omega*. It is fit we ſhould begin and end the day with his praiſe, who begins and ends it for us with his mercy. Well Chriſtian, thou ſeeſt thy duty plainly laid before thee. As thou wouldſt have God proſper thy labour in the day, and ſweeten thy reſt in the night, claſp them both together with thy morning and evening devotions. He that takes no care to ſet forth Gods portion of time in the morning, doth not only rob God of his due, but is a Thief to himſelf all the day after, by loſing the bleſſing which a faithful prayer might bring from Heaven on his undertakings. And he that cloſeth his eyes at night without prayer, lies down before his bed is made: He is like a fooliſh Captain in a Gariſon, who betakes himſelf to his reſt, before he hath ſet the *Watch* for the Cities ſafeguard. God is his Peoples Keeper: but can he expect to be kept by him, that chargeth not the Divine Providence with his keeping? The Angels, at his Command, pitch their Tents about his Saints dwellings. But as the drum calls the Watch together, ſo God looks that by humble prayer, we ſhould beg of him their Miniſtry and attendance about us.

I ſhall ſhut up this diſcourſe with one Caution to be obſerved in your daily exerciſe of this Duty.

Beware, that thy conſtant daily performance of this duty, doth not degenerate into a lifeleſs formality. What we do commonly, we are prone to be but ordinary and ſlighty in the doing. He is a rare Chriſtian, that keeps his courſe in prayer, and yet grows not cuſtomary to pray of meer courſe. The Power of Religion cannot be preſerved, without an outward Form and Order obſerved in its exerciſes and yet very hard it is, not to grow formal in thoſe duties which we are daily converſant with. Many that are very neat and nice when their Holy-day ſuit is on their back, are yet too ſlovenly in wearing their every-day Apparel. Thus at a Faſt, or on a Sabbath, our hearts haply are ſtirr'd up to ſome ſolemnity and ſpirituality becoming the Duty of Prayer, as being awed with the Sacredneſs of the time, and extraordinary weight of the Work: But, alas, in our every-day duties we are too ſlighty and ſlovenly. *Caution.*

Now

Now ſet thy ſelf, Chriſtian, with all thy might, to keep up the life and vigour of thy ſpirit in thy daily approaches to God. Be as careful to ſet an edge on thy Graces before thy prayer, as on thy ſtomack before thy Meal. Labour to come as hungry to this Duty, as to eat thy Dinner and Supper. Now, no expedient for this, like a holy Watch ſet about thy heart in the whole courſe of thy life. He that watcheth his heart all day, is moſt likely to find it at hand, and in tune for prayer at night: Whereas looſe walking breeds lazy praying. Be oft in the day putting thy ſelf in mind what work waits for thee at Night. Thou art to draw near unto thy God; and this will make thee afraid of doing any thing in the day, that will indiſpoſe thee, or make thee fear a chide from thy God when thou appeareſt before him. That of the *Apoſtle* is obſervable, 1 *Pet.* 1. 17. *If ye call on the Father, who, without reſpect of perſons, judgeth* according to every mans work, *paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear.* As if he had ſaid, Do you mean to pray? then look to the whole courſe of your walking, that it be in the *fear* of God, or elſe you will have little heart to go about that work, and as little hope that he will bid you welcome; for he judgeth of perſons that pray, not only by their prayers, but by their works and walking.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

Of Ejaculatory Prayer, its nature, excellent use and end.

2. THE second branch in the *Apostles* Directory for Prayer follows, which hath respect to the kinds of Prayer, that are to be taken into the Christians exercise; As for the season, he must *Pray always*, so for the kinds of Prayer, *With all Prayer and Supplication*, now there is a double [*All*] to be observed. 2.

First, *all manner* of Prayer. *Secondly*, *all matter* of Prayer. 1.

I shall begin with the *first*, *Modus orandi*, and that falls under several divisions and distinctions.

First, Prayer is *sudden and ejaculatory*, or *composed and fixed.*

Secondly, that which is composed, is either *Solitary*, or social, performed joyntly with others. 2.

Thirdly, Social and joynt Prayer, is either *private* in the Family, or *publique* in the *Church.* 3.

Fourthly, Solitary and Social, private and publique Prayer, are either *ordinary*, or *extraordinary.* 4.

First, *Ejaculatory*, which is nothing else but the lifting up of the Soul to God upon a sudden emergent occasion, with some short (but lively expression) of our desires to him, sometimes it is vocal, sometimes only groaned forth from the secret workings of a secret heart. These darts may be shot to Heaven without using the tongues bow: Such a kind of Prayer, that of *Moses* was, which rang so loud in Gods ear, that he ask't *Moses*, *Wherefore cryest* 1.

thou

thou unto me? *Exod.* 14. 15. Whereas we read of never a word that he ſpake, it was no ſeaſon for *Moſes* then to retire and betake himſelf to the duty of Prayer, in a compoſed and ſettled way, as at other times he was wont, for the enemy was at his back, and the people of *Iſrael* flocking about him, murmuring and charging him with the guilt of blood, in that he had enticed them out of *Ægypt* to fall into ſuch a trap; wherein they expected no other than to loſe their lives, either in the Sea, or by the *Ægyptians.* This no doubt made *Moſes* preſently diſpatch his deſires to Heaven by the hand of ſome ſhort ejaculation, the ſureſt and quickeſt Poſt in the world, which brought him back a ſpeedy and happy return, as you may ſee, *verſe* 16. Thus *Nehemiah* alſo upon the occaſion of the Kings Speech to him, interpoſeth a ſhort Prayer to God between the Kings queſtion, and his anſwer to it, *Nehe.* 2. 4. *Then the King ſaid unto me; For what doeſt thou make requeſt. So I prayed to the God of Heaven, and I ſaid to the King, &c.* So ſoon was this holy man at Heaven and back again (even in a trice) without any breach of manners, in making the *King* wait for his anſwer. Sometimes you have the Saints forming their deſires into a few ſmart and paſſionate words, which fly with a holy force from their lips to heaven, as an Arrow out of a Bow. Thus old *Jacob* when he was diſpatching his Sons back again to *Ægypt,* and had with the greateſt prudence provided for their Journey (by furniſhing them with double money, and a choiſe preſent in their hand to appeaſe the Governour of the Land) that now he might engage Heaven on their ſide, he breaths forth into this ejaculatory Prayer. *God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may ſend away your other brother and* Benjamin, *Gen.* 43. 14. And *David,* when intelligence came that *Ahitophel* was of *Abſoloms* Council, let fly that dart to Heaven, which came down upon his head with a vengeance, *O Lord I pray thee turn the Council of* Ahitophel *into fooliſhneſſe,* 2 *Sam.* 15. 31. This kind of praying *David* probably might mean, *Pſal.* 119. 164. when he ſaith, *Seven times a day do I praiſe thee,* not as if he had ſeven ſet hours for this duty every day, as the *Papiſts* would have it to countenance their ſeven Canonical hours; but rather a definite number is here put for an indefinite, and ſo it amounts to no more than this; he did very often in a day praiſe God, his holy heart taking the hint of every providence, to carry him to Heaven on this errand of Prayer and Praiſe.

Now

Now to dispatch this kind of Prayer, I shall only

First, shew, why the Christian beside his stated houres for Prayer (wherein he holds more solemn commerce with God) should also visit God occasionally, and step into his presence ever and anon (what ever he is about) with these ejaculatory breathings of his heart. For this is a kind of Prayer, that needs not interrupt the Christian, nor break any squares in his other employments. Is he on a Journey? He may go to Heaven in these short Salleys of his Soul, and make no lesse speed in his way for them. Is he in the Field at work? His Plough needs not stand still for this; As the Medow is not the worse for what the *Bee* sucks from its flowers; so neither doth a mans worldly occasions suffer any losse from that spiritual improvement, which a gracious soul thus makes of them. 1.

Sect. I.

THE first reason may be taken from God, who to shew his great delight in his childrens prayers, lets his door stand always wide open, that when ever we have but a heart, and will be so kind as to step into visit him with a Prayer at what ceile of the day or night soever it be, we shall be welcom, *nay*, he doth not only give us a liberty, but lays it as a Law upon us, to let him hear from us as oft as possibly we can, and therefore commands us to *Pray continually*, 1 *Thes.* 5. And, *what ever we do, in word or deed, to do all in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to the Father by him.* What do these, and such like places signifie? but that we should take every occasion that his Spirit and Providence bring to our hand for the lifting our hearts up to him in Prayer. And can we suppose that a Prayer at our first setting forth in the morning, with never thinking of God any more till we come to our round for Prayer at night again, will passe for a praying continually? When a Father chargeth his Son (that lives abroad) to let him as oft as may be, hear from him; though he doth not expect a long Epistle from him by every Messenger that comes that way, yet looks for some short remembrance of his duty by word of mouth, and it is accepted, till he hath more lei- *Reason* 1.

sure to write his full mind. God bids pray continually; now he knows we cannot be always on our knees in the solemn performance of this duty; But therefore he expects to hear the oftener from us in these occasional remembrances of him, (hinted to us all along the day by emerging providences) which the Holy Spirit stands ready as our Messenger to conveigh unto him.

Sect. II.

2. Secondly, from the excellent use of ejaculatory Prayer in the Christians whole course of life.

1. First, they are of excellent use to be set against those sudden injections of Satan, which he will be darting into our minds.

It were strange, if the best of Saints should not find the Devil busie with them in this kind; none so pure whose chastity of mind this foul Spirit dares not to assault; And when his temptations have once coloured our imagination, it is hard wipeing them off before they soak so deep as to leave some malignant tincture on our affections. Now when any such dart from hell is shot in at thy window, no such way to wind out of the temptation, as to shoot thy darts to Heaven in some holy ejaculation. Our Saviour taught his Disciples the use of this weapon. *Pray that you enter not into temptation.* Now when thou canst not draw out the long Sword of a solemn Prayer, then go to the short Dagger of ejaculatory Prayer; and with this, if in the hand of Faith, thou mayst stab thy enemy to the heart. He that at one short Prayer of *David* could infatuate *Ahitophel*, an Oracle for policy, can befool the Devil himself, and will at thy Prayer of faith; *The Lord rebuke thee O Satan*, (said Christ) it is time now for Satan to be gone, when Heaven takes the Alarum, as when Thieves are about a house to rob it, and they within beat a Drum, or give a sudden shriek to call in help, presently they flee; And if God for thy trial should not come at first call to rid thee of these unwelcom guests, yet thy very crying out (if affectionate and cordial) will clear thee from consenting to their villany.

2. Secondly, they are a Soveraign means to allay the Christians affections to the world, one of the worst enemies he hath in the field against him, for it choaks the Soul, thickens the Christians spirit,

ſpirit, and changes his very complexion. Who but dying men ſmell of the earth, and carry its colour in their countenance? Grace dyeth apace, where the heart ſavours much of the earth. Now prayer, what is it, but the lifting of the ſoul from earth to heaven? Were we oftner in a day ſucking in, as it were, freſh air, and new influences of grace from God, our ſpirits could not be poſſibly ſo much poyſon'd with worldly affections.

When one was askt, Whether he did not admire the goodly ſtructure of a ſtately Houſe? Anſwered, No; For (ſaith he) I have been at *Rome*, where more magnificent Fabricks are to be ſeen. Thus when Satan preſents the Worlds pleaſures or treaſures to the Chriſtian (that he may inveigle his affections to dote on them) a gracious ſoul can ſay, I have been at Heaven, there is not an hour in the day, wherein I enjoy not better than theſe in communion with my God.

SECT. III.

Thirdly. THey keep the Chriſtians heart in a holy diſpoſition for the more ſolemn performance of this Duty. He that is ſo heavenly in his earthly employments, will be the leſs worldly in his heavenly. It was a ſweet Speech of a dying Saint, That he was going to change his place, but not his company. A Chriſtian that is frequent in theſe ejaculations when he goes to pray more ſolemnly, he goes not from the world to God, but from God to God: From a tranſient view of him, to a more fixed; whereas another diſcontinues his acquaintance with God (after his morning viſit) and comes not in his company, till called in by his cuſtomary performance. O! how hard a buſineſs will ſuch a one find it to pray with a heavenly heart! What you fill the veſſel with, you muſt expect to draw thence; if Water be put in, we cannot without a miracle think to draw Wine. What? art thou all day filling thy heart with earth (God not in all thy thoughts) and doſt thou look to draw heaven thence at night? If you would have fire for your evening ſacrifice, expect not new from heaven to be dropt, but labour to keep what is already on thine Altar from going out; which thou canſt not better do, than by feeding it with this Fuel. 3.

SECT. IV.

4. Fourthly. THey are of excellent use to alleviate any great affliction that lies heavy upon soul or body, while others sit disconsolate, grinding their souls, and wasting their spirits with their own anxious thoughts. These are his wings with which he flieth above his troubles, and in an instant shoots his soul to heaven, out of the dinn and noise of his afflictions. How can he be long uncomfortable, who when any thing begins to disquiet him, lets it not lie boaking and belking in his mind (as a thorn in the flesh) but presently gives vent to it, by some heavenly meditation, or heart-easing prayer to God? Those heavy tidings which came to *Job* one upon the neck of another, it was not possible for him to have stood under their weight, had his thoughts been employed on no other subject than his affliction. But being able to lift up his heart to God; *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* This one devout meditation, or ejaculation, gave him incomparable ease. Indeed, in afflictions that are very sharp and violent, it is no time for long discourses; the poor creature cannot hold out in a continued duty of prayer, as at another time. When the fight grows hot, and the Army comes to graple hand to hand with their enemy, they have not leisure to charge their great Artillery, then their short Swords do them most service. Truly thus 'tis in this case; the poor creature may be finds his body weak, and his spirit oppress with temptations, which Satan pours like so much shot upon him, that all he can well do, is to pray quick and short. Now fetch a groan for the pain he feels, and then shoot a Dart to heaven, to call God in to his help. And blessed is the man, that hath his Quiver full of these Arrows. We see Christ in his Agony, chose to pray oft, rather than long; *If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: However, not my will, but thine be done.* This short ejaculation he sends to heaven thrice, with some little pause of time between prayer and prayer; *and was heard in that he fear'd*, Heb. 5.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

A Reproof to thoſe that uſe not this kind of prayer; or do it in a profane manner; or that uſe this kind of prayer, but neglect other.

SECT. I.

Uſe 1. FOR Reproof of thoſe that are wholly unacquainted with this kind of praying, not ſuch a Dart to be found in all their Quiver. Their heart is as a Bow bent indeed, and their Quiver full of Arrows; but all are ſhot beſide this mark; the World is their *Butt*, at this they let flie all their thoughts. God is ſo great a ſtranger with them, that they hardly ſpeak to, or think of him from morning to night, though they travel all day in his company: And is it not ſtrange, that God, who is ſo near his creature, ſhould be ſo far from his thoughts? Where canſt thou be? Or what can thy eye light upon that may not bring God to thy remembrance, and give thee a fair occaſion to lift up thy heart to him? He is preſent with thee in every place and company; thou canſt uſe no creature, enjoy no mercy, feel no affliction, and put thy hand to no work, which will not prompt thee either to beg his counſel, ſeek his bleſſing, crave his protection, or give him praiſe for his gracious providence over thee. The very beaſt thou rideſt on, could it ſpeak (as once *Ba-* *Uſe* 1.

Balaam's Ass did) would reprove thy Atheism, who goest plodding on thy way, and takest no notice of Him that preserveth both man and beast. But God speaks once, yea twice, and bruitish men perceive it not. Well may *Solomon* say, *The heart of the wicked is little worth*, when *God is not in all his thoughts.* What can that heart be worth, that is stuft with that which is worth naught? at least which within a while will be so? for *in that moment* wherein these poor wretches die, *all their thoughts perish*, and come to nothing. Truly, though ye were so many *Kings* and *Emperors*, yet if the stock of your thoughts be spent all the day long upon earthly projects (never flying so high, as to lead you into communion with God) you are but like those Vermin, that are buried alive in some stinking Dung-hill; the food your souls live upon, is low and base, and such must the temper of your souls also needs be. O! how many are there in the World, whose backs are bravely clad with Scarlet, while their souls embrace the Dung-hill? Whose bellies are high-fed, and deliciously pamper'd, but their souls set at course fare? The body which is the Beggar, is mounted on Horse-back, and the soul which is the Prince, walks on foot, preferr'd to no higher employment, than to hold her slaves stirrup, being made to bestow all its thoughts and care how to provide for that, and allow'd nothing for its self? yet these must be cried up for the only happie men in the World; whereas, some poor creatures are to be found (though their outward port and garb in the world renders them despicable) who enjoy more of heaven and true comfort by the frequent commerce they have with God (as they are at their Loom or Wheel) in one day, than the other do in all their lives, for all their pomp and fanciful felicities. What account will such give to God for the expence of their thoughts the first-born of their souls? What pity is it, that strangers should devour them? The highest improvement whereof, is to send them in Embassies to heaven, and to converse with God. He who gave man a countenance erect, to walk (not creep on all four as some other creatures, with their back upon heaven, and mouth to the earth) never intended his soul should stoop so below it self, and lick the dust for its food; but rather, that it should look up to God, and enjoy her self in enjoying communion with him, that is the Father of spirits.

If

If it be ſo ſad a ſpectacle to behold a man bowed down through the deformities or infirmities of his body, as to go like a beaſt on all four, hands and feet; much more, to ſee a ſoul ſo cripled with ignorance and ſenſual affections, that it cannot look up from the earth where it lies a roveling, to converſe with God its Maker.

SECT. II.

Secondly. IT reproves thoſe who do indeed ſhoot now and then to heaven ſome of theſe Darts of ejaculatory prayers; but in ſo prophane a way, as makes both God and gracious men to nauciate them. Did you never hear a vile wretch interlace his diſcourſe with a ſtrange medly of Oaths and Prayers? Rap out an Oath, and then ſend out a vain prayer in the midſt of his carnal diſcourſe? *God forgive us*; *God bleſs us*; *God be merciful to us*; ſuch forms of ſpeech many have got, and they come tumbling out when they do not mind what they ſay. Now which do you think is like to get firſt to heaven, their Oaths, or their Prayers? It is hard to ſay, whether their ſwearing or their praying be the worſt? What baſe and low thoughts have theſe wretches of the great God, to make ſo bold with his holy and reverend Name? which ſhould not be thought or ſpoken of, without fear and trembling. *The legs of the lame are not equal, ſo is a Parable in the mouth of fools.* That is, it is uncomely. The *Name of God*, doth not fit a prophane mouth; the diſcourſe is not equal. One ſtep in Hell and another in Heaven, is too great a ſtride at once to be taken. To ſhoot one Dart at God in an Oath, and another to him in a prayer, what can you make of this, but a toying with that which is Sacred? *Religion and the eye, are too tender to be plaid with.* Such prayers as theſe, are ſhot out of the Devils Bow, and are never like to reach heaven, except it be to bring back a curſe for him that put them up. 2.

SECT.

SECT. III.

3. Thirdly. A Reproof to thoſe who content themſelves with this kind of prayer; they will now and then caſt a tranſient glance upon God in a ſhort ejaculation; but never ſet themſelves to ſeek God in a more ſolemn way; and is this all thou canſt afford? No more but to look in at Gods door, and away preſently? Doſt thou not think that he expects thou ſhouldſt ſometimes come to ſtay longer with him in a more ſettled communion? It is true, theſe occaſional viſits when joyned with the conſcionable performance of the other, is an excellent ſymptom of a heavenly heart, and ſpeaks grace to be very lively where they are frequent: As when a man between his ſet meals is ſo hungry, that he muſt have ſomething to ſtay his ſtomack, and yet when Dinner or Supper come, can feed as heartily as if he had eaten nothing; This ſhews indeed the man to be healthy and ſtrong; but if a bit by the by takes away his ſtomack, that he can eat little or nothing at his ordinary meals, this is not ſo good a ſign. Thus here, if a Chriſtian between his ſet and ſolemn ſeeking of God morning and night, finds an inward hunger upon his ſpirit ſo ſtrongly craving communion with God, that he cannot ſtay till his ſtated hour for prayer returns, but muſt ever and anon be refreſhing its ſelf with the beverage of ejaculatory prayer, and then comes ſharp ſet to duty at his ordinary ſet time, this ſpeaks grace to be *in ſtatu Athletico*, ſtrong and thriving: but on the contrary, it ſhews a ſlighty and naughty ſpirit, to make theſe an excuſe or plea for the neglect of the other. Thou taſteſt ſure little ſweetneſs, and findeſt little nouriſhment from theſe, or elſe they would excite thy ſoul to hunger for further communion with God. As ſoon as *David* opened his eyes in the morning, his heart was ſallying forth to God, *When I awake, I am ſtill with thee.* And as he walk'd abroad in the day-time, every occaſion led him into the preſence with God.

Seven times a day do I praiſe thee; that is, often, (as it is ſaid, *The righteous fall ſeven times in a day.*) But did theſe ſhort glances of *David's* heart, ſteal from the more ſolemn performance of this duty? No; we find, he had his ſet ſeaſons alſo, *Evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray and cry aloud, Pſal.* 55. 17. Mr. *Ainſworth* interprets this place of ſolemn ſtated prayer; and it ſeems to have been the practice of the more devout *Jews*, to devote three ſeaſons in a day for that duty. I can no more believe him to be frequent and ſpiritual in ejaculatory prayer, who neglects the ſeaſon of ſolemn prayer, than I can believe, that he keeps every day in the week a Sabbath, who neglects to keep that one which God hath appointed.

CHAP. XXXII.

An Exhortation to the frequent uſe of Ejaculatory Prayer, with two or three helps thereunto.

Uſe 2.

TO the Saints: Be ye excited to the frequent exerciſe of this duty; I know you are not altogether ſtrangers to it, (if you anſwer your name, and be ſuch as you go for) but it is a more intimate and familiar acquaintance with this kind of prayer that I would gladly lead you into; ſuch an Art it is, that were we but skilfull Traders in it, we ſhould find a bleſſed advance in our ſpiritual eſtate, and ſoon have more money in our purſe, (grace and comfort I mean in our hearts) than now moſt Chriſtians can ſhew; we might, by a ſpiritual Alchimy, turn all we touch into gold, extract heaven out of earth, and make wings of every creature and providence that meet us, to help us in our flight to God: Our whole life would be (what I have read of a holy man)

but one communion day with Christ. Then neither friends nor foes, joys nor woes, callings nor recreations, (or whatever else we have in this world to do with) should be able to interrupt our acquaintance with him. Whereas now alas, every thing interposeth, as an opake body, to hide God and heaven from our eye. We who now walk (like Travellers in some bottom or low swamp) with our thoughts of heaven so over-topt by the world, that we hardly get a sight of that glorious City to which we are going from morning to night, (and thereby lose much of the pleasure of our journey) should then have it in a manner always before us, as a joyful prospect in our eye, to solace us in the difficulties of our pilgrimage, and make us gather up our feet more nimbly in the ways of holiness, when we shall see whither they lead us. We count them pleasantly scituated, who live in a climate where the Sun is seldom off their Horizon. Truly none have such a constant light of inward joy and peace shining upon their souls, as those who are familiarly conversant with this duty: They are *in sole positi* (as is said of the *Rhodians*) they stand at the best advantage of any other to have, if not a continual, yet a frequent intercourse with God, from whom both the influences of comfort and grace also do all come. And if those Trees must needs have the fairest and sweetest fruit which stand most in the Sun, then surely they are most likely to excell others both in comfort and grace, who are most with God. Every little that the *Bee* brings to the hive (as she flies in and out, though she stays not long on any flower) adds to the stock. Though the soul makes no long stay with God in this kind of prayer, yet the frequent reiterations thereof conduce much to the encrease of its grace. Light gain, with quick returns, makes a heavy purse. Little showers, often following one upon another, plump the corn, and fill the bushels. So do these short spurts (sallies of the soul to heaven, enrich and encrease grace in the heart exceedingly. Now if thou shouldst ask, how thou mai'st make this kind of ejaculatory prayer more familiar unto thee, take these few words of counsel.

I. First, *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, (thy affections I mean:) the very reason why we sally out so seldom toward God in these occasional prayers, is, because the weight of our affections poise us another way. The boul runs as its bias inclines, the stream flow

flows as the fountain empties it self. If our affections be carnal, to earth we go, and God hath little of our company. *Adam* (it is said) *begat a son in his own likeness*, *Gen.* 5. 3. and so doth the heart of every man. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; as is the heavenly, such they also that be heavenly. Labour therefore to get and keep thy heart heavenly, especially look to these three affections, thy Love, Fear, and Joy.

First, Thy Love: If this fire burn clear, the more of these sparks will from it mount up to God. Love is a great friend to memory. The Adulterer is said *to have his eyes full of the harlot*; and holy love will be as mindfull of God. Such a soul will be often setting God in its view, *I have set the Lord always before me*, *Psal.* 16. And by often thinking of God, the heart will be enticed into desires after him, *Isa.* 26. 8. *The desire of our soul is to thy Name, and remembrance of thee*; and see what follows, *vers.* 9. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.* Love sets the soul on musing, and musing on praying. Meditation is prayer in *Bullion*, prayer in the Oar, soon melted and run into holy desires. The laden cloud soon drops into rain, the piece charged soon goes off, when fire is put to it. A meditating soul is in *proximâ potentiâ* to prayer. *While I was musing* (saith *David*) *the fire burned, and I spake with my tongue. Lord make me know my end*, *Psal.* 39. This was an ejaculatory prayer, shot from his soul, when in the company of the wicked. 1.

Secondly, Thy Fear. Even wicked men, though they be great strangers to prayer, yet we shall hear them knocking at Gods door in a fright; much more will a holy fear direct the Christian, upon all occasions, to lift up his heart to God. Art thou in thy calling? fear a snare therein, and this will excite thee oft in a day to bespeak counsel of God, how to behave thy self therein. Art thou in company? fear lest thou shouldest do, or receive hurt, and thou wilt be lifting up thy heart to him that can onely keep thee from both. We cannot have a more faithful Monitor to mind us of this duty than a holy fear. *They that feared the Lord thought upon his Name*, *Mal.* 3. *At what time I am afraid* (saith *David*) *I will trust in thee.* 2.

Fear makes us think where our safety lies, and leads us to our refuge. Had not *Noah* feared a storm, the Ark had not been

built. Men fear no sin nor danger, and therefore God hears not of them all the day long. The ungodly world, who walk with their back upon heaven, and look not up to God from morning to night, we may tell the reason, *The fear of God is not before their eyes.*

3. Thirdly, Thy Joy and Delight in God: O cherish this. As fear disposeth to pray, so joy to praise. Now, and not till now, the instrument of thy heart is in tune. One hint now from the providence of God, and touch from his Spirit, will set such a soul on work to bless God. Carnal men, when they are frolique, and upon the merry pin, then they have their catches and songs, as they sit in their house, or ride on the way: How much more will the gracious soul, that walks in the sense of Gods love, be often striking up his Harp in holy praises to God? *Psal.* 63. 3. *Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Vers.* 4. *I will bless thee while I live.* And again, *vers.* 5. *My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.* See how he goes over and over again the same note. Joy can no more be hid than oyntment; as that bewrayeth it self by its hot and sweet perfumes, so doth holy Joy make its own report in the praises it sounds forth to God. It behoves thee therefore, Christian, to be as chary and choice of thy joy, as thou wouldst be of the blood in thy veins, for in this runs the spirits of praise and thanksgiving. Now would you nourish your joy? do it by sucking the promises, those breasts of consolation; these are a food of pure juice, and strong nourishment, they soon turn into blood, (joy and peace I mean) and with this a spirit of praise must needs grow also.

2. Secondly, Possess thy heart with strong apprehensions of Gods over-ruling providence in all thy enterprises, great or small. That he that doth what pleaseth him in heaven and earth, so that all thy labour and toil in any business is in vain, while this main wheel begins to stir; his providence gives countenance to the action. O how would this raise thy heart up to God, and send thee with many an errand into his presence. Suppose a man was going about some important business, and had him in his company that alone could help or hinder the dispatch of it; were it not strange that he should travell all day with him, and not apply himself to this person to make him his friend? This is thy very

case

caſe (Chriſtian) thou and all thy affairs are at the abſolute diſpoſure of the great God, to bleſs or blaſt thee in every enterpriſe; if thou haſt not his vote, thy buſineſs is ſtopt in the head. Now this God is always in thy company, whether at home or abroad, in thy bed, or at thy board. Surely didſt thou believe this firmly, thou wouldſt oft in a day turn thy ſelf to him, and beg his good-will to favour thy undertaking, and facilitate thy buſineſs for thee.

Thirdly, Look thou complieſt with the motions of the holy Spirit. The Chriſtian ſhall find him as his Remembrancer, to mind him of the more ſolemn performance of this duty of prayer, ſo his Monitor to ſuggeſt many occaſional Meditations to his thoughts, (even amidſt worldly employments) as a hint, that now it is a fit time to give God a viſit in ſome holy ejaculation (by thus ſetting the door (as it were) open for him into Gods preſence) ſometimes he will be recalling a truth thou haſt read or heard, a mercy thou haſt received, or a ſin thou haſt committed; and what means he by all theſe? but to do thee a friendly office, that by theſe (thy affections being ſtirred) thou maiſt be invited to dart thy ſoul up to God in ſome ejaculation ſuitable to his motion. Now take the hint he gives, and thou ſhalt have more of his company and help in this kind. For as the evil ſpirit, where he finds welcom to his wicked ſuggeſtions, grows bold to knock oftner at that door, becauſe it is ſo ſoon opened to him; ſo the holy Spirit is invited, where his motions are kindly entertained, to be more frequent in theſe his kind approaches, whereas thy neglect of them may cauſe him to withdraw, and leave thee to thy own ſlothful ſpirit. When Chriſt had thrice made an attempt to awake his drouſie Diſciples, by calling them up to watch and pray, and they fell to nodding again, truly then he bids them *ſleep on.* 3.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Of Secret or Closet-prayer, that it is a duty incumbent on us, and why?

2. THE second kind of *Prayer* is that which we called *composed*, because the Christian composeth himself more solemnly to the work, by setting some considerable time apart from his other occasions, for his more free, and full communion with God in prayer. Now this is either *secret*, or *performed joyntly with others.*

We begin with the first of these, *Secret Prayer.* When the Christian retireth into some secret place, free from all company, and there pours out his soul into the bosom of God, none being witness to this trade he drives with heaven, but God and himself. I shall here, *first*, prove this to be a duty incumbent upon us; and *secondly*, give the reasons why.

SECT. I.

1. FIrst, That it is the Christians duty, secretly and solitarily, to hold entercourse with God in prayer, I believe will be granted of more than practice it, even those that are strangers to the performance thereof, carry in their own bosom that which will accuse them for their neglect, except by long looking on the light, and rebelling against the same, their fooliſh minds be darkned, and have lost all sight and sence of a Deity. If any prayer be a duty, then secret prayer must needs be one. This is to all the other, as the *carina* or keel is to the ship, it bears

bears up all the rest. If we look into the practice of Scripture-Saints, we shall find them all to have been great dealers with God in this trade of secret prayer: *Abraham* had his *Grove* whither he retired *to call upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God, Gen.* 21. 33. We meet *Isaac* walking out into the field to seek some secret place, where he might more freely, with deep meditation, compose himself for this work, *Gen.* 24. 63. Neither was *Rebekah* a stranger to this duty, who upon the Babes struggling in her womb, *went to enquire of the Lord, Gen.* 25. 22. which, saith *Calvin*, was to pray in secret. *Jacob* is famous for his wrestling (as it were hand to hand) with God in the night. Holy *David*'s life was little else, *he gave himself to prayer, Psal.* 109. 4. allow but some time spent by him for natures refection, and the necessary occasions of his publick employment, (which yet came in but as a Parenthesis) and you shall find most of the rest laid out in meditation and prayer, as appears, *Psal* 119. We have *Elias* at prayer under the *Juniper-tree*, *Peter* on the Leads, *Cornelius* in a corner of his house; yea, our *blessed Saviour* (whose soul could have fasted longest without any inward impair, through the want of this repast) yet none more frequent in it; early in the morning he is praying alone, *Mar.* 1. 35. and late in the evening, *Matth.* 14. 23. and this was his usual practice as may be gathered from *Luk.* 22. 39. compared with *Luk.* 21. 37. Thus Christ sanctified this duty by his own example; yea, we have a sweet promise to the due performance of it, and God doth not use to promise a reward for that work, which he commandeth us not to do, *Matth.* 6. 6. *But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.* Where our Saviour takes it for granted, that every child of God will be often praying to his heavenly Father, and therefore he rather encourageth them in the work he seeth them about, then commands them to it. *When you pray*, as if he had said, I know you cannot live without prayer, now when you would give God a visit, *enter into thy closet, &c.*

SECT.

SECT. II.

BUt why must the Christian maintain this secret intercourse with God?

1. First, In regard of God; he hath an eye to see our secret tears, and an ear to hear our secret groans, therefore we ought to pour them out to him in secret. It is a piece of gross superstition to bind this onely to place or company: *I will* (saith the *Apostle*) *that men pray every where, lifting up pure hands, &c.* 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. God is every where to be found, at Church and at home, with our family, and in our closet; and therefore we are to pray every where. Oh! what a comfort is it to a gracious soul, that he can never be out of Gods sight or hearing where ever he is thrown, and therefore never out of his care? for it is out of sight out of mind. This comforted holy *David*, his friends and kinsmen, they, alas! were afar off, he might lie upon his sick-bed, and cry till his heart aked, and not make them hear; but see how he pacifies himself in this his solitude, *Lord, my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee, Psal.* 38. Little thought *Jacob* that he had a son prisoner in *Egypt*, laden there with irons that entred into his soul; but he had a God that was nigh unto him all the time of his distress, and heard the cry of the poor prisoner, though his earthly father never dreamt of any such matter.

Great and rich are the returns which in *Scripture* we find to be sent from heaven, upon the solitary adventure of the Saints in this bottom. *This poor man cryed* (said *David*) *and the Lord saved him out of all his troubles, Psal.* 34. 6. as if he had said, Haply you are afraid to be so bold as to go alone and visit God in secret; Though you dare venture to joyn with others in prayer, and hope to find welcome when you go with such good company, yet you are ready to say, Will God look upon me, or my single prayer? Yes. Behold me, saith *David*, who am newly come from his door, where I lay praying in as poor a condition, and as sad a plight, as ever beggar was at mans: A poor exile, in the midst of enemies that thirsted for my blood; yet I (and that when I betrayed so much dastardly unbelief, as to scrabble on the wall like a mad-man) cried, and God heard.

Who

who then need be afraid either from his outward ſtreits or inward infirmities (if ſincere) to go with a humble boldneſs unto God? Nay further, as God hath a pitiful eye to ſee when we pray in ſecret, ſo alſo an angry eye, that ſees when we do not. I have read of a Prince that would in the evening walk abroad in a diſguiſe, and liſten under his ſubjects windows, whether they talked of him, and what they ſaid; to be ſure Gods eye and ear watcheth us, *The Lord hearkned and heard it, Mal.* 3. 16. And he that hath a book of remembrance for his Saints that fear him, and think upon his Name, hath alſo a black bill for their names who ſhut him out of their hearts and cloſſets. *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to ſee if there were any that did underſtand and ſeek God.* Though his ſeat bein heaven; yet his eye is on earth; and what doth he obſerve but *whether men underſtand and ſeek God?*

2. In regard of our ſelves, the more to prove our ſincerity. I do not ſay that to pray in ſecret amounts to an infallible character of ſincerity, (for hypocriſie may creep into our cloſſet (when the door is ſhut cloſeſt) as the Frogs did into *Pharaoh's* bed-chamber; yet this is not the hypocrites ordinary walk: and though his heart may be nought that frequently performs ſecret duty, yet to be ſure his heart cannot be good whoſe devotion is all ſpent before men, and is a meer ſtranger to ſecret communion with God: or elſe our Saviour in drawing the hypocrites picture would not have made this to be the very caſt of his countenance, *Matth.* 6. 5. *When thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray ſtanding in the ſynagogues, &c. But when thou prayeſt enter into thy cloſſet.* The command ſends us as well to the cloſſet as to the Church, and he is a hypocrite that choſeth one, and neglects the other, for thereby it appears he makes conſcience of neither; he likes that which may gain him the name of Religious in the opinion of men, and therefore puts on a religious habit abroad, but in the mean time lives like an Atheiſt at home. Such a one may for a time be the worlds Saint, but God will at laſt uncaſe him, and preſent him before the eyes of all the world for a hypocrite. The true lover delights to viſit his friend, when he may find him alone, and enjoy privacy with him; and I have read of a devout perſon, who when the ſet time for his private devotions were come, would, what ever company he was in, break

from them, with this handsom speech, *I have a friend that stays for me, farewel.* It is worth parting with our best friends on earth to enjoy communion with the God of heaven. One called his friends *thieves*, because they *stole Time* from him. None worse thieves than they who rob us of our praying seasons.

Thirdly, In regard of the duty it self, and the influence which the holy management of it would have upon the Christians life. This duty is a main pillar to uphold the whole frame of our spiritual building, without this, the Christians house (as *Solomon* saith of the sluggards) will drop out at the windows. That which is most necessary to keep the house standing is under ground, (I mean the foundation) that which keeps the man alive is the heart in his breast, that is unseen. Cease your secret communion, and you undermine your house, you stab godliness to the heart. If the Tree grow not in the root, it will ere long wither in the branch. He that declines this way, can be a gainer in no other; how zealous soever he may appear, all without this is but a distempered heat, (as when the outward parts burn, but the inward chill) such a one may pray to the quickning and comfort of others, but he will get little of either himself. The truth is, this is the first step toward Apostasie; back-sliders grow first out of acquaintance with God in secret, their delight in this duty declines by little and little, then are they less frequent in their visits, upon which follows a casting off the duty quite; and yet they may appear great flicklers and zealots in publick Ordinances: but if they recover not what they have lost in their secret trade, they will ere long break here also.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Wherein is ſhewn the low ſtoop of the Divine Majeſty, to hold communion with a ſingle Saint in his cloſſet-prayer; as alſo how they bring their grace into queſtion who live in the total neglect of this kind of prayer.

LEt us here admire the condeſcending love of God, in ſtooping to hold any communion with his poor creatures, while they are clad with rags of mortality, and thoſe beſmeared alſo with many ſinful pollutions. Is it not enough that in heaven, when we ſhall put on our robes of glory, (befitting the attendance of ſo great a King) that then he will take us into his Royal Preſence, and give us places with thoſe that ſtand about him? but will he even now, while our garments ſmell of the priſon, and before our grave-clothes be quite thrown off, admit us to ſo near an acceſſion? What manner of love is this, that we ſhould now be called the children of God, and as ſuch have liberty to ſpeak our gibberiſh and broken language, and that with delight to him, who continually hath the praiſes of bleſſed Angels and glorified Saints ſounding in his ears? Nay yet more, this liberty to be indulged us, not onely when we come together, and make up a quire in our publick worſhip, but in our ſolitary and ſecret addreſſes; that a poor creature, when ever himſelf hath but a heart to ſtep aſide, and give God a viſit in any corner of his houſe, ſhould find the arms of ſo great a Majeſty open to embrace him; this is ſo ſtupendous, that we may better admire than expreſs it. Should we ſee a poor beggar ſpeaking familiarly with a *Uſe 1.*

great King, who while all his Courtiers ſtand bare before him, takes him into his embraces, and lets him familiarly whiſper in his ear; might it not draw forth our wonderment at ſuch an act of grace from Majeſty to beggary? This is the glorious priviledge of every Saint on earth, who when he prays, hath liberty to come up to the throne of God, ſurrounded with glorious Angels, and into his boſom to pour out his ſoul as freely, as the child may ſpeak to his indulgent father. O thank our good friend and brother, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for this; it is he that brings us into the preſence of God, and ſets us before his face, as *Joſeph* his brethren before *Pharaoh*. Whoſe face need a Saint fear to look upon, that may thus boldly ſpeak to God? Comfort thy ſelf with this, Chriſtian, when thou goeſt with thy petition to any great man on earth, and he will not be ſeen of thee, or ſuch a rich kinſman, and he will not own thee; turn thy back of them both, and go to thy God, he will look on thee, and in his Son own thee for his child; thou haſt his ear that can command their heart and purſe too. *Jacob*'s prayer altered his brothers purpoſes, that he who meant to kill him falls on his neck to kiſs him. *Nehemiah* had a boon to beg of the *Perſian King*, and he goes (a carnal heart would think) the fartheſt way about to obtain it; he knocks firſt at heaven dore, *Proſper, I pray thee, thy ſervant this day, and grant him mercy in the ſight of this man*, *Nehem.* 1. 11. and now to Court he goes, where, behold, he finds the door open before he knocks, for the *King ſaid unto him, For what doſt thou make requeſt? chap.* 2. 4. We may (you ſee) open two doors with this one key; at the prayer of this holy man, God and man both give their gracious anſwer. The Chriſtian ſurely cannot long be in want, if he can but pray: As one ſaid, The *Pope* could never want money ſo long as he could hold a pen in his hand. It is but praying in faith, and the thing is done which the Chriſtian would have: *Be careful for nothing, but let your requeſts be made known to God, and the peace of God ſhall keep your hearts, &c. Phil.* 4. *Commit thy way to the Lord, and he ſhall bring it to paſs, Pſal.* 37. The Saints bills are received at firſt ſight, whatever the ſum is, Chriſt is our undertaker to ſee it paid, and his credit holds ſtill in his Fathers boſom, and will, to procure welcom for all his Saints, even to the leaſt and laſt of them that ſhall be found on earth.

2. This blots their names from among the number of Saints, that

that were never acquainted with this duty. What! a Saint! and content with what thou haſt of God in joynt communion with others at Church or family, ſo as never to deſire any privacy between God and thy ſelf? Canſt find no errand to invite thee to ſpeak with God alone? thou bringeſt thy Saintſhip into queſtion. When a Prince paſſeth by in the ſtreet, then all (even ſtrangers themſelves) will come in a throng to ſee him; but his child thinks not this enough, but goes home with him muſt live with him, and be under his eye daily. Hypocrites and prophane ones will crowd into publick Ordinances, but a gracious ſoul cannot live without more retired converſe with him.

CHAP. XXXV.

An Exhortation to the Saints to hold up their acquaintance with God in ſecret prayer, and ſome directions as to their management of it.

BE exhorted, O ye Saints, to hold up your ſecret acquaintance with God. *I am perſwaded* (as *Paul* ſaid to *Feſtus* in another caſe) *that none of theſe things which I have ſpoken*, concerning this duty, *are hid from thee*, if a Saint. *Believeſt thou* that this is thy duty? *I know that thou believeſt*. Doſt thou pray in ſecret? I dare not queſtion it, the Spirit of Chriſt which is in thee will not ſuffer thee to be wholly a ſtranger from it. But I would provoke thee to be more abounding therein: *Theſe things have I written* (ſaith *John*) *unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God*, 1 *Joh.* 5. 13. that is, that you may believe more; and theſe things do I now write to you, that call upon the Name of God in ſecret, that you may call oftner; and this you need, except you lived further from

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from Satans quarters than the rest of your brethren do; no duty more opposed by Satan or our own slothful hearts than this: The devil can allow you your Church-prayers, your family-duties, and now and then a formal one in your closset too, and yet make his market of you. Therefore take along with you these three or four directions for your better managing thereof.

1. Let it be your constant trade. Rouling stones get no moss, unstable and unconstant hearts will never excel in this or any other duty. The spirit of prayer is a grace infused, but advanced to further degrees by daily exercise. Frequency begets familiarity, and familiarity confidence. We go boldly into his house whom we often visit.

2. Let it be true secret prayer, and not have its name for nought, take heed no noise be heard abroad of what thou dost in secret. *Enter into thy closset* (said Christ) *and when thou hast shut thy dore, pray:* Be sure thou shutteſt it so close that no wind of vain-glory comes in; rather than there should, shut the door of thy lips as well as of thy closset; God can hear, though thy mouth delivers not the message. It is true, when *Daniel* prayed, *he opened his window*, but it was to shew his faith, not his pride, that he might let the world know how little he feared their wrath, not that he coveted their praise. God curiously observes which way thy eye turns, and it is a dishonor he will not bear, that thou shouldst be pensioner to the world in expecting thy reward from man, and not himself. Lose not Gods *Euge* for mans *Plaudite*, this is to change heaven for earth, and that is a bad bargain.

3. Be free and open, come not to God in secret, and then keep thy secrets from him; speak thy very heart, and hide nothing from him: to be reserv'd and close is against the Law of friendship. *I have called you friends* (saith *Christ*) *for all things I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* Is Christ so open-hearted, not to conceal any thing he knows for our good? and wouldst thou have any secret box in thy cabinet, that He (if thou couldst help it) should not see? Art thou confessing sins? strip thy soul naked, and shuffle not with God; if thou dost, it speaks one of these two things, That thou hast some secret design of sin for the future, or harboureſt an ill opinion of God in thy breast concerning thy past sins, as if he would not be faithful to forgive what thou

art

art free to confeſs: Like ſome prodigal child, who though his father promiſeth to pay all his debts, and forgive him alſo; yet becauſe the ſum is vaſt, dares not truſt his father with the whole truth, but conceals ſome in his confeſſion. The firſt of theſe is not the ſpot of Gods children, but into the latter they ſometimes fall, and for a while may be held by Satans policy, and their own unbelief. But conſider (Chriſtian) whatever thy ſin is, and how great ſoever, yet the way to obtain pardon is by confeſſing, not concealing it; neither is it concealed from God though thou confeſs it not. But God likes a confeſſion out of thy own mouth ſo well, that as ſoon as thou doſt lay open thy own ſhame, he hath obliged himſelf faithfully to cover it with the mantle of pardoning mercy, 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins, he is juſt and faithful to forgive us our ſins.* Again, art thou making thy requeſts to God? carry no burden away upon thy ſpirit through a fooliſh modeſty and fear of troubling God too much, or asking too deep, ſo long as the Promiſe is on thy ſide. Chriſt never complain'd that his Saints open'd their mouthes, or enlarged their deſires too wide in prayer; nay, he bids his Diſciples open them wider, and tells them, *They had ask'd nothing*; that is, nothing proportionable to the large heart in his breaſt to give.

4. It muſt be ſeaſonable, this gives every thing its beauty. *Firſt*, Take heed that it doth not juſtle with publick worſhip; the devil takes great pleaſure in ſetting the Ordinances of God at variance one againſt another: Some he perſwades to cry up publick prayer, and neglect ſecret; and others he would fain bring out of love with the publick, by applauding the other; whereas there is room enough for both in thy Chriſtian courſe. *Moſes*, though he killed the *Egyptian*, yet the two *Iſraelites* when ſcuffling together, he labour'd to reconcile. Beware of giving Satan ſuch an advantage, as to neglect the communion of Saints in the publick, under a pretence of praying in thy cloſſet; this is to ſet one Ordinance to fight with another; they are ſiſter-Ordinances, ſet them not at variance. Deny thy preſence in the publick, and thou art ſure to loſe Gods preſence in thy cloſſet. *Prov.* 28. 9. *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, his prayer ſhall be an abomination.* *Secondly*, Look that it interferes not with thy duty in thy particular calling. As thou art to ſhut thy cloſſet door to pray, ſo to open thy ſhop-windows for following thy calling in the

the world. Go into thy closset before thy shop, or else thou art an Atheist; but when thou hast been with God there, attend thy shop and calling, or else thou art an hypocrite. Thou consistest of soul and body, God divides thy employment between both; he that is not diligent in the duty he owes God concerning both, is conscientious in neither. When every part in the body hath its due nourishment distributed to it, health is preserved. So here, he is the sound Christian that divides his care wisely for his spiritual state, and temporal also. Sleep not away thy time for prayer in the morning, and then think thou art sufficiently excused for omitting it, because thy worldly business calls thee another way. Jade not thy body with over-labouring, nor over-charge thy mind with too heavy a load of worldly cares in the day, and then think, that the weariness of the one, and discomposure of the other, will discharge thee from praying again at night; this is to make a sin thy apology for neglecting a duty.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Of Family-prayer, wherein is proved, That it is the duty of those that have the charge of a family, to set up the Worship of God in it.

THE second kind of composed prayer is that which is performed in joynt communion with others; and this is double, either *Private* or *publick*, *Family-prayer*, or *Church-prayer*. I begin with the first, *Family-prayer*.

By a family I mean a society of certain persons, in mutual relation each to other, natural or civil, who live together under the domestick government of Husband, Master, or Parent. Where ever such a family is found, it is the duty of the Governor of it to set up the Worship of God there, and this part

part of worſhip in particular, Prayer in his family. The *Jews* had their *Family-ſacrifice*, *Exod.* 12. 21. which the Maſter of the houſe performed at home with his family. There ſtill remains a ſpiritual ſacrifice of prayer and thankſgiving, which every Maſter of a family is with his houſhold to offer up to God. The private houſe is the Chriſtians *Chappel of eaſe*, to worſhip God in daily with his company. The Church began in a family, and it is upheld ſtill by the piety of private families: If the Nurſery be not preſerved, the Orchard muſt needs in time decay.

But the queſtion will be, How can it be proved that family-prayer is a duty? *Queſt.*

I hope none will require an expreſs place of Scripture commanding this *in terminis*, or elſe not believe it a duty incumbent upon them. This were the way not onely to loſe this part of Gods Worſhip, but other duties alſo. It will trouble us to find an expreſs word commanding us in *totidem verbis*, or in plain terms to keep the Chriſtian Sabbath, or to baptize our infant children; yet God forbid we ſhould (with ſome) ſhake off theſe Ordinances upon this account. That which by neceſſary conſequence can be deduced from Scripture, is Scripture, as well as that which is laid down in expreſs terms. And if this will content you (which I am ſure ſhould) I will hope to give you ſome ſatisfaction. *Anſw.*

SECT. I.

FIrſt, That general command for prayer, will bring this of family-prayer within the compaſs of our duty, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. *I will therefore that men pray every where.* If every where, then ſurely (ſaith *Mr. Perkins* upon this place) in our families, where God hath ſet us in ſo near relation to one another. *Paul* ſalutes the *Church* in *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*'s houſe, *Rom.* 16. 5. And were they not a ſtrange Church who live together without praying together? had they deſerved ſo high and honorable a name, if they had thus ſhut God out of doors? This were to call them a Church as a Grove is called *Lucus à non lucendo.* The *Jews*, when they built any of them a new houſe to dwell in, they were to dedicate it, *Deut.* 20. 5. and the manner of dedicating their 1.

new-built houses was with prayer, as you may see by the *Title* of the *thirtieth Psalm*, penn'd on this occasion, *A psalm and song at the dedication of Davids house.* This they did, first to express their thankfulness to God, who had given them an habitation: Indeed it is no small mercy to have a settled place for our abode, a convenient house for our selves and relations peaceably to dwell in; it is more than those precious Saints had, *Heb.* 11. 38. *who wandred in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth*: yea, than Christ himself had, *Matth.* 8. 20. *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.* Secondly, By this they were admonished to acknowledge themselves tenants to God, and that they held their houses of him their great Land-lord upon condition of doing him homage, by making their houses as so many Sanctuaries for his worship while they lived in them. So *Mollerus* upon the place.

SECT. II.

Σ THe trust which Governors of families are charged with, will evince it is their duty to set up prayer in their families. Every Master of a family hath *curam animarum*, he hath the care of souls upon him as well as the Minister; he is Prophet, King, and Priest in his own house, and from every of these will appear this his duty. *First*, He is a Prophet to teach and instruct his family. Wives are bid to learn at home of their husbands, 1 *Cor.* 14. then sure they are to teach them at home. Parents are commanded to instruct their children, *Deut.* 11. 19. *Ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house.* And *Ephes.* 6. *To bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Now there is a teaching and admonition by prayer to God, and praising of God, as well as in catechising of them, *Col.* 3. 16. *Teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns.* The Masters praying with his family, will teach them how to pray when by themselves: The confessions he makes, petitions he puts up, and mercies he acknowledgeth in his family-duty, are an excellent means to furnish them with matter

for

for their devotions. How comes it to pass that many servants and children, when they come to be themselves heads of families, are so unable to be their relations mouth to God in prayer? but because they have in their minority lived in prayer-less families, and were kept in ignorance of this duty, whereby they have neither head nor heart, knowledge or affections suitable for such a work. *Again*, He is a King in his house, to rule his family in the fear of God: As the Political Magistrates duty is to set up the true worship of God in his Kingdom, so he is to do it in his house, he is to say with *Joshua*, *I and my house we will serve the Lord.* Were it a sin in a Prince, though he served God himself in his palace, if yet he did not set up the publick worship of God in his Kingdom? surely then it is a sin in the governour of a family, not to set it up in his house, though he prays himself in his closset. *Lastly*, He is a Priest in his own house, and where there is a Priest there must be a sacrifice, and what sacrifice among Christians but the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and thanksgiving? Thus *David*, we find went from publick Ordinances to perform private duties with his family, 2 *Sam.* 6. 20. *Then David returned to bless his household*; that is, saith one upon the place, he returned to worship God in private with them, and to crave a blessing from God upon them. And this hints a third particular.

SECT. III.

THirdly, The practice of Saints in all ages hath been to have a religious care of their families. Good *Joshua* promised for himself and his house, that they would serve the Lord. If he meant the inward worship of God, he promised more than he was able to perform in regard of his family, for he could not thrust grace into their hearts: We must therefore understand him, that it should not be his fault if they did not, for he would use all means in his power to make them do so, he would set them a holy copy in his own example, and he would take care that they should not live without the worship of God in his family. We find *Elisha* praying with his servant, 2 *King.* 4. 33. master and man together. *Queen Esther* and her *Maids* keeping *Answ.*

private fast in her family, *Esth.* 4. 16. now it were uncharitable to think, that she was a stranger to the ordinary exercise of this duty, who was so forward to perform the extraordinary, and put others also upon it: Surely this gracious woman did not begin her acquaintance with this duty now, and take it up onely at a dead lift in her present streight. That were a gluttonous fast indeed, that should devour the worship of God in her family for all the year after. *Cornelius* his family-religion is upon record, *Act.* 10. 2. *A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.* Mark, he was a devout man, and feared God with all his house: Fear is oft put for the worship of God. God is called the *fear of Isaac*, *Gen.* 30. 53. that is, the God whom *Isaac* worshipped. 2 *King.* 17. 36. *Him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship. Neither shall ye fear other Gods, verf.* 37. that is, ye shall not worship or pray unto them. Thus we may conceive *Cornelius* was a devout man, and feared God with his house. Surely he that was so merciful to the poor at his door, to refresh their pinched bowels with his alms, could not be so cruel to his relations souls within his house, as to lock up his Religion in a closset from them.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Three Objections against setting up this Duty in Families, answered.

Quest. BUT what necessity is there, that a family must meet joyntly to worship God together? will it not serve if every one prays for himself in his closset?

Answ. A family is a collective body, as such, it ows a worship to God: It is he that *setteth the solitary in families*, *Psal.* 68. 6. and as their Founder, will be vouched by them, *Pour out thy fury upon the*

the families that call not on thy name, Jer. 10.23. It holds in domestick families as well as National, for he rears up the one as well as the other. There are family sins, and these are to be confess'd by the family, as National sins by the Nation. There are family wants, and they require the joynt supplications of the family. There are family occasions and employments, and those call for the united force of the family, to pull down a blessing upon their joynt labours for the good of the whole society. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.* And is it not fit that they who joyn in work, should joyn in prayer for a blessing on their endeavour? There are family-mercies that the whole society share in; and is it not meet, that they which eat of the same feast, should joyn in the same song of praise to the founder of it? In a word, there are judgments that may wrap up the whole family, and where all are concern'd in the danger, all should lend their help to prevent it; and many hands make light work. A rope twisted of many cords is stronger, than those very cords would be if single; and so the prayer of many together more prevalent, because likely to be more fervent, than of the same persons severally employed in their closets, (though I would not learn one to justle with the other, there is room for both, why should they fall out?) *Polanus* in his *Syntag. de Terramotu* tells us of a *Town* in the *Territory* of *Bern* in *Switzerland*, consisting of ninety houses, that was in the year 1584 destroyed by an Earth-quake, except the half of one house, where the Master of the family was earnestly praying with his wife and children upon their bended knees to God.

O but I have not abilities and gifts for such a work, and better left undone than spoiled in the doing. *Object.*

No more hadst thou skill and ability for thy trade when thou wentest first to be an Apprentice. Apply thy mind to the work, bind the duty upon thy conscience, search the Scripture, where matter for prayer is laid up, and rules how to perform the duty. Study thy heart, and observe the state of thy family, till the sense of the sins, wants, and daily mercies thereof (which thou hast lodg'd in thy memory) be left warm upon thy spirit. In a word, exercise thy self frequently in secret prayer, be earnest there for his Spirit to enable thee in thy family-service, and take heed of driving the holy Spirit from thee, whose assistance *Answ.*

sistance thou prayest for, by sloth, worldliness, pride, or any other course of wickedness. Then, up and be doing, and thou mayst comfortably expect God will be with thee, both to assist and accept thee in the work. *Moses* was sick of his employment that God called him to, and fain would have put it off with this mannerly excuse, *I am not eloquent, but am of a slow speech.* But this objection was soon answered, *And the Lord said unto Moses, Who makes the dumb to speak? who hath made mans mouth? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say, Exod.* 4. 11. His call was extraordinary, and his assistance was such. Thy call to this duty (as the head of a family) is ordinary, and so mayst look for ordinary assistance; haply thou shalt never have an ability (to such a degree) with a flow of words to express thy self as some others: But let not that discourage thee, God looks not at the pomp of words, and variety of expressions, but sincerity and devotion of the heart. The key opens not the door because gilt, but because fitted to the wards of the lock. Let but the matter of thy prayer be according to Gods mind, holy and warrantable, and the temper of thy heart humble and fervent, and no fear but thou shalt speed. Yea, let the prayer be old, pray to day what thou didst yesterday, be but sure to bring new affections with thy old prayer, and thou shalt be friendly received into Gods presence, though thou canst not on a sudden put thy requests into a new shape. God will not shut his child out of doors, because he comes not every day in a new-fashioned suit.

Object. Others there are who object not their own weakness, as the reason of their not praying in their families, but the wickedness of others in their family. They are confident enough of their own gifts, but question others grace, and whether they may pray with such.

3. I will grant there are such in thy family; but is this a ground to lay aside the worship of God? Little thinkest thou whither this principle will lead. By this principle, the worship of God should not onely be laid aside in most private houses, but in all our publick Congregations also. If thou mayst not pray in thy family because a wicked person is present, then not joyn in prayer with any publick Congregation, because thou canst never be assured that they are all godly; nor must the Minister pray there,

for

for fear some wicked ones should be in the company, and so this part of divine worship must be thrown out of the Church, till we can find an Assembly made up of all true Saints; and where such a one ever was, or will be on this side heaven, none I think is able to tell. Surely the Saints in Scripture were not thus scrupulous. How oft did *Christ* himself pray with his Disciples, though a *Judas* was among them? I have elsewhere clearly I think proved, it is the duty of all, even of the wicked to pray; and that God will never charge the act of prayer upon him as sin, but his obliquity therein; much less will he impute to thee anothers sinful frame of heart, with whom thou joyneſt in prayer. Pray thou in faith, and his unbelief shall not prejudice thy faith, nor his pride thy humility. Thou joyneſt with him in the duty, but hast no communion with his sin. You may as well say, If a cut-purse in the time of prayer should pick anothers pocket, that all the company are guilty of his theft. How much better were it (Christian) to fear, lest thou pray with a wicked heart in thy own bosom, than with a wicked person in thy family? Thou art like neither to hurt thy own soul by praying in his company, nor better his, by omitting the duty for his sake. May be, though he be carnal, yet he is outwardly complying, and how knoweſt thou but thy prayer (especially in his presence) may pierce his heart, and give a lift towards his conversion? Such I have heard of, who have had the first sensible impression made upon their hearts in this duty of prayer. If he be not onely carnal, but a mocker at the worship of God, and a disturber of the duty. Better thou shouldst with *Abraham* turn such an *Ishmael* out of doors, than for his sake turn God out of doors, by denying him the worship due unto him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

A Reproof to those that unnecessarily throw themselves to live in such families, where the worship of God is not set up.

1. OF Reproof to those Christians, who needlesly, and upon choice, throw themselves upon such families, where the worship of God is not set up. Dost thou know whether thou goest? thou art running with *Jonah* from the presence of the Lord, and maist expect a storm to be sent after thee. Haply thou art a servant, who once didst live in a godly family, where thou hadst many sweet priviledges, and spiritual advantages, a table spread every day for thy soul as oft as for thy body, (besides some exceedings now and then of extraordinary duties) and thereby didst enjoy a kind of heaven upon earth; but for a little ease in thy work, or gain in thy wages, thou hast made this unhappy change, to put thy self under the roof of those, who will sooner learn thee to curse and swear, than to pray; and where by the orders kept in the family thou canst not know a Lords-day from a week-day, or whether there be such a thing as Religious worship and invocation due to thy Maker or no. Alas, poor creature! what? wert thou even now in so green a pasture, and now wandring upon the barren heath, where nothing is to be got for thy precious soul? where (as on the *Mountains* of *Gilboa*) none of those heavenly dews fall with which thy soul was wont to be wet and watered? Truly thou art gone out of Gods blessing into the warm Sun. Had God indeed cast thee by a necessary providence on such a place, thou mightest then

then have hoped to keep thy ſpiritual plight (though wanting thy former repaſt) but being thy own choice, it is to be feared thou wilt ſoon pine and languiſh in thy ſpiritual ſtate, leanneſs is like to ſhrivel up thy ſoul, while thou haſt thy fat morſels in thy mouth. Thy ſpirit will grow light and poor, though thy purſe may grow heavy; we ſhall have thee ere long complain (as *Naomi*) that *thou wenteſt out full, but comeſt home empty.* How dareſt thou chuſe to dwell, where God himſelf doth not by his gracious preſence? *He inhabits the praiſes of his people,* and takes his abode in the houſe of prayer. And if the holy Spirit dwells not, walks and breathes not in the houſe, it muſt needs be haunted with the evil one. Make thy ſtay there as ſhort as may be. Leave the dead to dwell with the dead, Atheiſt with Atheiſt; thy ſafety will be to get among better company. Is the Church ſo barren of godly families, that no ſuch are to be found who will open their door to let thee in? Go, enquire where ſuch live, and offer to do the meaneſt office in that houſe where thou maiſt enjoy thy former priviledges for thy ſoul, rather than ſtay where thou art. The very beaſts groan to ſerve the wicked, whereas holy Angels themſelves diſdain not to miniſter unto the Saints.

But haply thou wilt ſay, 'Tis not thy choice, but neceſſity. *Queſt.*
Thou art by thy parents put apprentice to a maſter that is wicked, or thou liveſt under thy own parents ſhadow, and thou canſt not help it though they be prophane; or with an husband whom thou didſt hope (at thy choiſe of him) would prove a meet help to thy ſoul, but thou findeſt it otherwiſe; what would you have us in this caſe to do?

Firſt, Mourn under it as thy great affliction. Thus *David* did, *Anſw.* 1.
when he lived in *Saul's* wicked family, whoſe court and family (for irreligion and prophaneneſs) he compareth to the barbarous *Arabians*, and prophane *Iſhmaelites*, lamenting that he was coopt up with ſuch, whom by his relation he could not well leave, and for their wickedneſs he could worſe bear; *Wo is me that I ſojourn in Meſheck, and dwell in the tents of Kedar.*

Be the more in thy ſecret communion with God. If thou didſt 2.
live with a niggard, who pinched thee for thy belly, wouldſt thou not, though thou hadſt but a penny in thy purſe, lay it out for bread rather than ſtarve? Thou hadſt need have a bit the more

in a corner, becauſe thou art cut ſhort of thy daily bread in the family; thy ſoul cannot live without communion with God. Take that thy ſelf which others will not be ſo kind to allovv thee; and that thou maiſt do this, husband all thy ends of time the better. Thou ſhalt thus by Gods bleſſing, *firſt*, keep thy ſpiritual life and vigour; *ſecondly*, be antidoted againſt the infection of that prophane air thou breatheſt in; and *thirdly*, have a vent to eaſe thy incumbered ſpirit of thoſe griefs, reproaches, and trials, thou canſt not but meet with from ſuch relations. Gracious *Hannah* had an adverſary in the ſame family, (*Peninnah* by name) who provoked her ſorely, even to make her fret; but this ſent her to God in prayer, and there ſhe eaſed her ſoul of her burden.

3. Adorn thy piety to God by faithful performance of thy duty to thy relations (though they be not ſo good as thou deſireſt.) Art thou a ſervant, and thy Maſter prophane? be thou ſubmiſſive and humble, diligent and faithful; let him ſee that thou dareſt not rob him of thy time by ſloth, or wrong him in his eſtate by falſneſs (though he be a thief to thy ſoul by not providing for it) but doſt with thy utmoſt skill and ſtrength endeavour to diſcharge thy truſt to him. We ſee too oft, that the unfaithfulneſs and negligence of ſome profeſſing ſervants, do ſet their carnal maſters further off from the worſhip of God than before they were, yea, make them loath the duties of Religion, which otherwiſe they might have been won unto, till at laſt they come to think all profeſſion and forvvardneſs in the duties of piety tovvards God, to be but an hypocritical cloak to cover ſome unfaithfulneſs to men, and to ſay of their ſervants, when they beg leave to go to a Sermon, and wait on God in his Ordinances, as *Pharaoh* of the *Iſraelites*, *Ye are idle, ye are idle; therefore ſay ye, Let us go and do ſacrifice to the Lord*, *Exod.* 5. 17. Thus as the Apoſtle tells us, the Name of God and his Doctrine comes to be blaſphemed by the ill behaviour of profeſſing ſervants, 1 *Tim.* 6. 1. *Again*, Art thou a vvife, and thy husband carnal, who lives without any care of his ovvn ſoul, or thoſe under his roof? Pray the more for him becauſe he prays not with thee; pray thou for thy family in thy cloſet, though he neglects it in the houſe: But vvith this, be ſure to commend thy piety to thy husbands conſcience, and make it as legible as may be to

his

his eye, by thy meekneſs of wiſdom in thy carriage to him, and whole converſation in thy family. A fair print invites to read the Book; Religion fairly printed in thy meek and dutiful behaviour to him, and diſcretion in all thy affairs, how knoweſt thou but it may in time win him to the conſideration of the excellency of Religion, which makes thee ſo officious and faithful to him? He is an unwiſe angler that ſcares the fiſh he deſires to take, and ſhe an unwiſe Chriſtian, that by her peeviſh and undutiful carriage offends her husband, whoſe converſion ſhe deſires and prays for.

CHAP. XXXIX.

A word of counſel to thoſe that live in praying-families.

A Word of counſel to you, whom God hath planted in Religious families. *Uſe* 2.

First, Bleſs God for caſting thy lot in ſo pleaſant a ſeat, and fruitful a ſoil for thy ſoul, where thou maiſt ſuck in the ſweet air of Gods Spirit, that breathes from thy godly parents or other Governors, at the throne of grace from day to day; that thou art not wedg'd into ſome blind atheiſtical family, there to live with a godleſs crew, among whom thou mighteſt have paſſed thy days without any knowledge of thy Maker, and with them have been involved in that *curſe* of God, which is *in the houſe of the wicked*, and hangs like a black cloud in the threatning, ready to pour down upon the families that call not upon his Name. Look round thy neighbourhood, and ſee how many families there are, who live like brutes (as in ſo many dark caves and dens) where none of that heavenly light is ſeen from one end of 1.

the year to the other, which shines on thy face every day. What nurture and breeding should thy soul have had under the tutoring of such parents and masters, whom themselves live without God in the world? The Queen of *Sheba* counted them happy that stood before *Solomon*, not so much that they might see his pomp, but hear his wisdom. O happy thou (if grace to know thy priviledge) that thou ministerest unto a godly master, art under gracious parents, or yoked to a holy husband, from whose devout prayers, pious counsels, and Christian examples, thou maist gain more, than if they had the wealth, delicacies, and preferments of *Solomon's* Court to confer upon thee.

Look you make improvement of this spiritual advantage, 21.
or else it will go worse with you than others. Rebellious *Israel* is told, *They shall know that they had a Prophet among them*; the meaning is, they shall know it to their cost; and so shall those that have lived in families, under such Governors, who went before them, and as it were chalked out a way to heaven by their godly example, lamenting over their precious souls so oft with their prayers and tears: If such miscarry, they shall know to their terror what families they once lived in, but had not a heart to prize or improve the mercy. God forbid that any of you should find the way to hell out of such doors, and force your way to damnation through such means afforded to prevent it. What will *Cain* answer, when his father that begat him shall bear witness against him, and say, Lord, this wicked child of mine never learned his Atheism of me; I brought him to thy worship, and taught him thy fear, but he liked it not, and first proved a murderer, and then an apostate; first, he behaved himself wickedly in thy service, and then ran out of thy doors and cast it quite off? What will then the flouting wife of *David*, who (though of a wicked stock) was priviledged with so gracious a husband, say, when she shall be accused for making him her laughing-stock for his zeal in the worship of God? Or how will the wicked children of the same holy man, who walked with such uprightness in his house, look their godly father on the face at the great day? You, my children, said dying Mr. *Boulton*, dare not, I believe, meet me at the day of judgment in an unregenerate state. The weight of such holy mens prayers and admonitions will then sink their ungodly relations deeper into hell than others, who drop thither out of dark and blind families.

CHAP.

CHAP. XL.

A word to those Governours of Families, that have not the Worship of God in their houses.

UNto you that are heads of families, but yet have not had a heart to set up the worship of God in them, I am afraid God hath little from you in your closets, who hath none in your families; 'Tis no breach of charity to suspect your care for your own souls, that shew none for your relations: If ever thou hadst been acquainted with God thy self, and tasted any sweetness in secret communion with him, couldst thou thus rob thy family of so great a blessing? could you find such a treasure, and hide it from them you love so well? Have they not souls as precious in their bosoms as thy own? art thou not willing they should find the way to heaven as well as thy self? yea, art thou not Gods feoffee in trust to take care of their souls as well as of their bodies? dost thou owe no more to thy child and servant than to thy hog or horse; their bodies are looked too, and wilt thou do no more for the other? How knowest thou but thy holy example in the duties of Gods worship among them, may leave such impressions on their hearts, as shall never be worn off to their dying day? Did you never hear any to the praise of God acknowledge, that the first turn towards heaven they ever had, was by living in such a godly family, where with the worship of God, a savour and secret sence of the things of God did secretly steal into their hearts? Certainly were our youth more acquainted with the duties of Religion in private, the Ministers work would be much facilitated in the publick: By this, the consciences of many would be preserved tender, and so become more pliable to the counsels of the Word preached; whereas

whereas now the devil hath a ſad advantage (from the irreligion and atheiſm that is in moſt families) to harden their hearts to ſuch a degree, as renders them almoſt impenitrable. It is no wonder to ſee that tree thrives not, which ſtands but little in the Sun, and as little wonder to ſee them continue prophane and wicked, that but once in a week come under the beams of an Ordinance, and then ſee nor hear any more of God till the Sabbath comes about again. Alas! How is it like the ſpark ſhould then be found alive, which had all along the week nothing to keep it from dying? One well compareth the publick Miniſtry to the Maſon that builds the houſe, and family-governours to them that make the brick. Now if you (by neglecting your duty) bring clay inſtead of brick, you make the Miniſters work double. The truth is, the neglect of family-worſhip opens a wide flood-gate to let in a deluge of prophaneneſs into the Church. Thou liveſt now without the worſhip of God in thy family, and haply in a few years from under thy one hive ſwarms many other families (children or ſervants) and it is moſt like that they will follow thy copy: Indeed it were a wonder, that they who are taught no better ſhould do otherwiſe; and ſo irreligion is like to ſpread apace. When thy head is laid in the duſt, thy prophaneneſs is not buried in thy grave with thee; no, thou leaveſt others behind to keep it alive. O how diſmal is it to lay the foundation of a ſin to many generations! the children unborn may riſe up and curſe ſuch. If I had heard my father pray, may the child ſay (in a dying hour) or had been led into the acquaintance of the worſhip of God by his example, then had not I lived like a Heathen as I have done. Well, as you would not have your children and ſervants meet you in the other world with their mouthes full of out-cries and accuſations; or if this (becauſe it ſeems further off) dread you not, as you would not have them prove a plague and ſcourge to you in this world, let not your family-government be irreligious: It is juſt that God ſhould ſuffer thy ſervant to be unfaithful to thee in thy eſtate, who art ſo to his ſoul; that thy children when old ſhould forget their duty to thee, that didſt bring them up like Heathens in their youth, without learning them their dutie to God.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLI.

To those governors of Families that perform this duty.

TO you that have set up this duty in your families, a few words of counsel for the more holy management thereof. 4.

SECT. I.

THink it not enough to prove thee a Saint that thou praiest in thy familie, you may set up the worship of God in your house, and not enthrone God in your hearts. God forbid that you should bless your selves in this, and dub your selves Saints because of this; Alas, you are not as yet got so far as some hypocrites have gone. The duty is good, but the outward performance of it doth not demonstrate any to be so. There are many turnings to hell nearer heaven than this. From the act therefore look to the end thou proposest to thy self in it. He is a foolish archer that shoots his arrow before he hath taken his aim aright. The question God asks, is, *Dost thou at all pray to me, even to me?* Thou maist possibly affect others with thy praying, yea, be instrumental to break their hearts by thy confessions, and refresh their spirits by the sweet expressions that flow from thee, thy self playing the hypocrite all the while. 't behoves thee therfore to consider, what is the weight and spring which sets this duty a going in thy familie, is it not to g in an opinion of being religious in others thoughts? if so, thou plaiest at small game, indeed Religion were a sorry thing, if this were all to be got by it. When thou hast obtained this end, it will not ease thee of one flieth of conscience, nor quench one spark in hells tormenting fire 1.

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for thee; but if this be it thou hunteſt after, 'tis a queſtion whether thou believeſt there be ſuch a place or no. Theſe few principles well girded by faith about the loins of thy mind, That there is a God, and he a rewarder of thoſe that diligently ſeek him; That Heaven is prepared for the ſincere, and Hell gapes for the hypocrite, would be enough to ſet thy heart right in the duty. Though the Traveller minds not much his way, where he apprehends no danger; yet when he comes to paſs over a narrow bridge, where a wrie ſtep may hazard his life by falling into a deep River that runs on each hand, he will ſurely watch his eye that is to guide his foot. This is thy caſe. Praier is a ſolemn work, as any thou canſt go about in thy whole life-time; a by end in this may hazard thy ſoul as much, as a wry look thy body in the other. We need do no more to loſe our ſouls, than to ſeek our ſelves.

SECT. II.

2. TAke heed thou blotteſt not thy holy duties with an unholy life. If thou meaneſt to foul thy hands with ſins black work in the day, why doſt thou waſh them in the morning with prayer? it is to no purpoſe to begin with God, and to keep the devil company all the day after; religious orders in thy houſe, and a diſordered converſation ill agree. O! do not render the worſhip of God baſe to the thoughts of thy ſervants and family. Thoſe that like the wine, will yet nauciate it when brought in a cup that is naſtie and unclean. The duties of Gods worſhip command a reverence even from thoſe that are carnal, but if performed by thoſe that are looſe and ſcandalous, they grow fulſome. *Ely's* ſons made the people loathe the Lords ſacrifices. By thy religious duties thou ſetteſt a fair copie, O do not write it in ſinking paper. It is but a while thou art ſeen upon thy knees, and a little ſeeming zeal at thy devotion, will not gild over a whole days ſinful miſcarriage, ſpent in paſſion, idleneſs, riot, or any other unholy courſe. It is ſaid, that *Chriſt preached with power and authority, not as the Scribes, Matth.* 7. 39. not but that they had authority to preach, for *they ſate in Moſes his chair*; but becauſe they loſt that reverence

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rence, by not walking ſuitably to their doctrine, which their place and work would have given them in the conſciences of their hearers. *They ſaid, and did not*, and thereby rendred their doctrine ineffectual. If thou wouldeſt pray with authority and power, enforce thy duties with puritie of life. 4

Sect. III.

PReſerve peace and unity in thy familie: a brawling familie cannot be a praying familie. The *Apoſtle* exhorteth husband and wife to love and unitie, *leſt their prayers be hindred*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. Contentions in a familie hinder the ſpirit of prayer, and alſo the anſwer to our prayers. 1. They hinder the ſpirit of prayer, the Spirit of God is a Spirit of peace and love, and therefore delights not to breathe in a troubled air; the ready way to ſend him going, is to brawl and chide. *Grieve not the holy Spirit of God*, (ſaith the *Apoſtle*) *Epheſ.* 4. 30. and that we may not, hear what is his counſel, *Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil ſpeaking, be put away from you, with all malice*: When theſe are gone, then (and not before) look for his ſweet companie. You may as well dwell comfortably together with your houſe on fire, as pray ſo together, when you in the houſe are on fire. 2. Contentions hinder the anſwer to our praiers; if we pray in anger, God cannot be pleaſed. *The wrath of man fulfills not the righteouſneſs of God.* A loud wind beats down the ſmoak: our prayers are compared to *Incenſe*, but they will never aſcend to heaven till this ſtorm be laid; go to pray in this plight, and God will bid you come when you are better agreed; the Spirit will not help in ſuch prayers, and if the Spirit hath no hand in the inditing, Chriſt will have no hand in preſenting the prayer; and if Chriſt preſent it not, to be ſure the Father will not receive it, for *through him we have an acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father*, *Epheſ.* 2. 18. 3

SECT. IV.

4. BE very choise whom thou makest a member of thy familie; get, if thou canst, such under thy roof as may give a lift with thee in thy familie-worship. Though it be not thy sin to pray with a wicked wife and servant, yet is it thy sin to make choice of such for thy relations, (if otherwise thou canst help it) yet alas, how little is this considered? Though the blessing and comfort of the familie be deeply concerned therein; a little beauty, honor, or pelf, do too oft blind the eyes, and bribe the judgments of those, who we may hope to be themselves gracious; that they can yoke themselves with such as are very unmeet to draw with them in heaven-way and work; *David* knew that *Michal* came of a bad stock, but haply hoped to bring her over to comply with him in the service of God, and we see what a grievous cross she proved to him. *Solomon* tells us of some that *trouble their own house*, *Prov.* 15. 27. He that for carnal respects takes a wicked wife into his bosom, or servant into his family, is the man that is sure to do this: Haply when he would pray and praise God, his wife like *Job*'s will bid him curse; when he is at duty, she will despise him in her heart, and make a mock of his zeal, as *Michal* did of *David*'s. And so they, who for some natural abilities they see in a servant, venture on him, though wicked and ungodly, pay dearly for it; such often bring with them that plague of prophaneness which infects the rest; so that what they earn their Masters with their hands, they rob them of with their sins, which brings the curse of God to their familie. Who that is wise would build a house with Timber that is on fire? If the servant thou entertainest be wicked, fire is in him, that will endanger thy house. Make it therefore thy care to plant a godly familie. This was *David*'s resolution, haply h. saw the evil of his former choice, *Mine eyes shall be on the faithful of the land that they may dwell with me, he that walketh in a perfect way he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house, he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight Psal.* 01. 6, 7. Then the Musick will be sweet in thy familie-duties, when thou canst get a consort into thy house; such whose souls are in tune for those holy services thou art to joyn with them in.

SECT.

Sect. V.

KEep a diarie of thy familie sins and mercies, that so neither the one may escape thy confession and humiliation, nor the other thy grateful recognition; if this were observed, we should not come with such jejune and barren hearts to the work, as now alas most do. Take some time to affect thy heart with both these, the brokennes of thy heart who prayest, will conduce much towards the same disposition in those that joyn with thee; nothing melts metall sooner than to pour that on it which is melted; The drousie speaker prays oft the rest asleep that joyn with him. Take heed therefore of formalitie, this is the canker which eats out the very heart of religious duties. Remember thou art to thy familie what the Minister is to the publick assembly, as the deadnes of his heart in prayer and preaching hath a bad operation upon his people to make them like himself, so hath thine on thy familie: Thou dost not onely suffer a personal loss thy self, but wrongest the rest of thy company: As when thou wastest thy estate, thy wife, children, servants, and all fare the worse, and must pinch for it; so when thou chokest up thy heart with inordinate cares of the world, or any other way indispossest thy self by thy sinful walking for the duty of prayer, thy whole familie goes by the loss with thee. 5.

Sect. VI.

OBserve the fittest seasons for dutie in thy familie, when with most freedom and least disturbance it may be performed; in the morning, take the opportunitie before a throng of worldly busines crowds in upon thee. In some families I have observed (where they are in great employments) that if dutie be delayed till some worldlie occasions be dispatch'd; then, either it hath been shut out, or shut up in such straits of time, that the slightie slovenlie manner of performing it hath proved little better than the total neglect. To prevent this disorder, it is best to forestal the worlds market, betimes in the morning to set upon the dutie, 6.

and offer up to God the first fruits of the day, before our thoughts meet with a diversion. We read, *Exod.* 16. 21. that the *Israelites gathered their Manna early in the morning*, and *when the Sun waxed hot it melted.* I would wish (especially such who have multiplicitie of worldly occasions) to take their time for communion with God earlie, while their thoughts are more comp ct, before they are hot in their worldly business, lest they then find their thoughts so diffused and scattered among other businesses, as will not easilie be gathered into a close and united attendance upon God in the dutie. *Again*, when night comes, delay not the work till ye are more fit to go to your pillow than to your cushion, to sleep than to pray. If the eye sleep, the soul cannot well wake. Especially consider your servants that labour hard in the day, O do not expose them to the temptation of drousie prayers; if our hearts took delight in the work, we would plot and contrive which would be the best time for communion with God, even as Lovers do how and when they may most privatelie meet together.

CHAP. XLI.

Of publick Prayer, that God requires it, and why?

2. THE second kind of social or joynt prayer is *Publick*; that which is made in and by the Church assembled together for the worship of God. In handling of which I shall endeavour these five things.

1. First, to shew, That God requires a publick worship of his people.

2. Secondly, That Prayer is a part of this publick worship he commands.

3. Thirdly, Why God requires a publick Worship, and in particular, publick prayer.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, I shall resolve a question or two concerning publick prayer. 4.

Fifthly and lastly, I shall make some applicatory improvement of this head. 5.

Sect. I.

First, for the first, That God requires a publick worship of his people. This word *Cultus* or worship in general, is *obsequium alicui præstitum juxta excellentiam ejus*, Worship is that honor and service which we give to any one according to his excellency, and it is threefold, Civil, Moral, or Divine. *Civil worship* is the due honor and service we pay to a person in place and power over us, as Prince, Father, or Master. *Moral*, is that due reverence and respect which we pay to a person, that hath any excellencie of vertue or place, without authoritie over us. Thus we give honor and veneration both to the Saints living on earth with us, and to the Angels and Saints in heaven. *Religious or divine worship* is the honor and service we give to that Being, which we believe is the Author of our beings, and fountain of our happiness. Now, this Being is God, and he onely. To him therefore, and him alone is Religious worship due: *Deut* 6. 13, 14. *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his Name, ye shall not go after other gods.* This Religious worship of the true God comes under divers distinctions, Inward and Outward, Private and Publick. The publick worship of God is the present subject of our discourse, that I mean, which the Congregation performs to him in their Religious Assemblies, called *Psal.* 89. 5. *the Congregation of Saints*; and *vers.* 9. *the Assembly of Saints.* The Church of God on earth began in a family, and so did the worship of God: But when the number encreased, the worship of God also became more publick. *Gen.* 4. 26. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord*, that is, they began publickly, (saith *Mercer*) *Seth* and other of the Religious seed begun to have their holy Assemblies for the service of God, *Willet in locum.* It is observable, how God at the promulgation of the *Law* on *Sinai*, when he first formed the *Israelites* into 1.

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a *Polity*, took special care for erecting a publick worship to his Name. That was the *day of their espousals, Jer.* 2.2. and then he instituted a solemn form of publick worship, with exact rules how it should be performed. The same care took our Lord Jesus for his Gospel-Church, in appointing both Church-Ordinances and Officers to dispence the same.

SECT. II.

2. SEcondly, Prayer is part of that Religious worship, which the Church is to perform to God in her publick Assemblies, yea, a principal part, put therefore frequently for the whole, *Zech.* 8. 21, 22. *The inhabitants of one City shall go unto another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts. I will go also. Yea, many people and strong Nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord of Hosts.* It is a prophesie, how believers in Gospel-times should zealously provoke one another to go to the Assemblies of the Church, (of which *Jerusalem* was a Type) there to pray and worship God together. *It is written* (saith our Saviour) *my house shall be called of all Nations the house of prayer, Mark* 11. 17. This was partially performed, when Converts in the Apostles days did flock to *Jerusalem*, there to worship God. *Sed perfectè impletum est illud in Christi Ecclesia ex omnibus gentibus collectâ, &c.* It is more fully accomplished in the Church of Christ, gathered out of all Nations, that should keep up the worship of God in her Assemblies. Saint *Luke* forgets not to mention this of prayer, amongst the other duties and offices of primitive Christians in their Assemblies, *Act.* 2. 42. *They continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* By continuing stedfast in the Apostles doctrine, *Mr. Perkins* understands their attendance on the Apostles Sermons; by fellowship, understands their contributions to the poor, which were gathered at their Assemblies, a work very fit for that place, *for with such sacrifices God is well pleased, Heb.* 13. by breaking of bread, the celebration of the Lords Supper; and by prayers, those which they put up together in communion at their Church-

Church-meetings. Nor is this of prayer crowded last, because the least duty of the companie; but rather, because it hath a necessary influence into them all; the Word, and Sacraments, which God useth to sanctifie his people by, are themselves sanctified to us by Prayer. And Saint *Paul*, when he hath shewn, 1 *Tim.* 1. what doctrine Ministers are to preach in the Church, he in the *second Chapter* directs them what to insist chiefly on in their publick prayers; *I exhort therfore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for Kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.* This the Church of Christ ever esteemed a principal part of their publick worship. *Tertullian* speaking of the Assemblies of the Church, saith, *Coimus in cœtum & congregationem, ut ad Deum quasi manu facta precationibus ambiamus orantes, hæc vis Deo grata est.* We meet in the Congregation, that we may by our fervent prayers environ God, as an Army doth a Castle, and this holy force with which we assault heaven pleaseth him. I proceed to the third Head, to give some account, Why God requires a publick worship, or a joynt service of his people in communion together, and why this particular duty of Prayer.

Sect. III.

1. FIrst, As a free and open acknowledgment of their dependance on, and allegiance to God. It is most reasonable we should own the God we serve, even in the face of the world, and not like *Nichodemites* carry our Religion in a dark Lanthorn. He is unworthy of his Masters service, that is ashamed to wear his livery, and follow him in the street with it on his back. *This day* (saith *Moses* to *Israel*) *thou hast avouched the Lord to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people*, Deut. 26. 17, 18. Even Heathens understand thus much, that they owe a free profession and publick service to the god they vouch: *All people walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the*

the Name of the Lord our God for ever and ever, *Micah* 4. 5. Now by walking in the Name of God, they mean, they will invocate his Name, and vouch him by a publick worship, as you may see by the *first* and *second* verses of that Chapter. And this is a Gospel-prophesie concerning the last days. Where by the way we may take notice of the folly and pride of those; that cast off publick Ordinances and private also, from a pretence of their high attainments, leaving these duties of Religion as strings for those that are yet children to be led by. This is horrible pride and ignorance, to have such a high opinion of themselves. But were they so perfect as they falsly imagine themselves, and needed not any further teaching, yet ought they not still to vouch God by worshipping of him? The ground from which divine worship becomes due to God, is his own infinite perfections, and our dependance on him as the Author of our beings, and fountain of our bliss. Hence it is, that Angels and Saints in heaven worship him, though in a way suitable to their glorified state. Some Ordinances indeed fitted to the Church-militant on earth, shall there cease; but a worship remains, yea, 'tis their constant employment. Saints on earth serve God always, but cannot always worship, therefore they have stated times appointed them. Now to cast off the worship of God, is to renounce God himself, and communion with his Church both on earth and in heaven. *Isa.* 65. 11. *Ye are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy Mountain*; they did not give him his publick worship, and he interprets this as a casting him off from being their God. Sometimes I confess the Church doors are shut by Persecutors, and when this flood is up the ways to *Zion* mourn; yet then we are to lament after the Lord and his Ark. Holy *David* was no stranger to private Devotions, yet could not but bewail his banishment from the publick, *My flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary*, *Psal.* 6. 3.

2. To preserve Love and unity in the *Church*. God is one, and dearly loves oneness and unity among his people. This reason he gives why he would have the Curtains of the *Tabernacle* coupled together, *That it might be one Tabernacle*, *Exod.* 36. 13--18. The fastning of these curtains so lovingly together for this end, that the Tent might be one, signified the knitting and clasping together

together of the Saints in love. Now though this be effected principally by the inward operation of the holy Spirit upon their hearts, for he alone can knit ſouls, and knead them into one lump; yet he uſeth their joynt communion in Ordinances as a happy means, through which he may conveigh and derive his grace that faſtens them in love together. Theſe are the ligaments that tie one member to another in this myſtical body. And do we not ſee that Chriſtians (like members of the natural body) take care for, and ſympathize with one another, ſo long as they are united in one communion; but when theſe ligaments are cut, communion in worſhip is broke, then we ſee one member drops from another, and little care for, or love to each other, is to be found among them. The *Apoſtle* ſaw good reaſon to joyn both theſe in one Exhortation, *Heb.* 10. 24, 25. *Let us conſider one another to provoke to love, not forſaking the aſſembling of our ſelves together*; as if he had ſaid, If you cannot agree to worſhip God one with another, you will have little love one for another. When the *Jews ſtaff of Beauty* was cut aſſunder, the *ſtaff of Bands* did not laſt long unbroken, *Zech.* 11. 10. Religion hath its name *à Religando*, it is a ſtrong binder; break the beautified order of Church-communion, and a people will ſoon fall all to pieces. It is obſervable, how endearing converſation and communion is in things of an inferiour nature, ſchollars that go to School together, thoſe that board in the ſame houſe, *Collactanei*, that ſuck the ſame milk, Twins that lie together in the ſame belly, they have a mutual endearment of affection each to another. How influential then muſt Church-communion needs be, where all theſe meet? when they ſhall conſider they go to the ſame publick School of the Miniſtry, ſit at the ſame Table of the Sacrament, ſuck the ſame breaſts of Ordinances, and lie together in the boſom, yea, womb of the ſame Church. This was admirably ſeen in the primitive Chriſtians, who by fellowſhip in Ordinances were inſpired with ſuch a wonderful love to one another, that they could hardly find their hearts in their own breaſts: *Act.* 2. *All that believed were together, and continued in the Temple with one accord, and breaking bread from houſe to houſe, did eat their meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart.* But when a breach was made in the Churches communion, then love catcht her cold, and grew upon Chriſtians as diviſions encreaſed. Now one would think,

the cauſe of our diſeaſe being ſo eaſily known, the cure ſhould not be ſo hard, as alas at this day we find it.

3. For the Saints ſafety and defence againſt their enemies. *Paul* rejoyced at the order and ſtedfaſtneſs of the *Coloſſian Saints*, 2 *Col.* 5. Order is a military word, and denotes *cohortem ordine apto conglobatam*, An Army compact, and caſt into ſuch a fit order, that every part is helpful to each other for its defence; and ſuch an Army are the Saints, when they ſtand in communion together according to divine rule. Our bleſſed Saviour, when departing from earth to heaven, what courſe took he to leave his Diſciples in a defenſive poſture after he was gone? doth he ſend them home to look every one to himſelf? No, but to *Jeruſalem* there to ſtand, as it were in a body by joynt communion, *Act.* 1. The Drop is ſafe in the River, loſt when ſever'd from it; the Souldier ſafe when marching with the Army, but ſnapt when he ſtraggles from it. *Cain* looking upon himſelf as an excommunicated perſon from the Church of God, expected ſome great evil (as well he might) would befall him. Therefore the gracious ſoul (meant by the ſpouſe) is brought in asking, where the Aſſembly of the faithful is, that joyning her ſelf to it ſhe may be protected in a time of danger, *Cant.* 1. 7. *Tell me, O thou whom my ſoul loveth, where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy flock to reſt at noon? for why ſhould I be as one that turneth aſide by the flocks of thy companions?*

4. Becauſe of the great delight he takes in the joynt prayers and praiſes of his people. We need not detract from the excellency of private devotions, to magnifie the publick prayers of the Church, both are neceſſary, and highly pleaſing to God; yet it is no wrong to the private devotions of a particular Saint, to give the precedency to the publick prayers of the Church. God himſelf tells us, *Pſal.* 87. 2. *He loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.* No doubt the prayers which the faithful put up to heaven from under their private roofs, were very acceptable unto him; but if a Saints ſingle voice in prayer be ſo ſweet to Gods ear, much more the Church-quire, his Saints prayers in conſort together. A father is glad to ſee any one of his children, and makes him welcom when he viſits him, but much more when they come together, the greateſt feaſt is when they all meet at his houſe. The publick praiſes of the Church are the emblem

blem of heaven it self, where all the Angels and Saints make but one consort. There is a wonderful prevalency in the joynt prayers of his people. When *Peter* was in *prison*, the Church meets and prays him out of his enemies hands. A Prince will grant a Petition subscribed by the hands of a whole City, which may be he would not at the request of a private subject, and yet love him well too. There is an especial promise to publick prayer, *Matth.* 18. 20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them. Non dicit ero, non enim tardat vel cunctatur, sed sum jam illic invenior præsens gratia & favore singulari, eo quod summopere me delectet hujusmodi concordia.* He doth not say, I will, for he makes no delay or demur upon the business: But I am there (let them come as soon as they will) present by my special favour and grace, because this concord in prayer highly pleaseth me. It is the gloss of *Lucas Brugens* upon the place.

CHAP. XLII.

Two Questions about Publick Prayer Answered.

FOurthly, I come to answer a question or two concerning Publick Prayer. 4.

SECT. I.

THe first Question is, Whether it be lawful that the Publick Prayers of the Church be performed in a Language not understood by the people? *Quest.* 1.

All the offices of the Church, and duties performed in its worship, are to be done unto edification: This is an *Apostolical Canon.* Now none can be edified by what he understands not, and *Answ.*

therefore it must needs be, as *Beza* calls the *Papish Latine Service*, *Ludibrium Dei & hominis*, a mocking of God and man, for to bable such prayers in the Church which the people know not what they mean. *If I pray* (saith the *Apostle*) *in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 4. he means, the Congregation are not the wiser for his understanding the prayer he puts up, except he could make them understand it also. We can no more be edified by anothers Intellect, than be saved by anothers faith. When God intended to defeat that bold attempt of those sons of pride, who would needs build a Tower that should vie with the heavens for heighth, he did no more but confound their languages that they might not understand one anothers speech, and it was done, presently their work ceased: And as they could not build, so neither can he edifie the people that understands not his speech in prayer. A dumb Minister may serve the peoples turn as well, as he who by his speech is a Barbarian to them; for the Ministers voice is necessary in his publick administrations, as *Augustine* saith, *Significandæ mentis suæ causâ, non ut Deus sed ut homines audiant, &c.* To signifie his meaning, not that God may hear, for he hears those prayers which the tongue is not employed to express, but that the people may hear, and so joyn their Votes with his to God. As the Minister is to pray for them, so they to pray with him, which they are to testifie by their hearty *Amen* at the close: But this they cannot do, if we believe *St. Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 16. *How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?* *The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth* (saith *Solomon*) *Prov.* 16. 23. that is, he will not (as we say) suffer his tongue to run before his wit, but know what he shall speak, before he sends his tongue on his errand. And surely above all this, wisdom is to be shewn in our prayers, wherein we speak not to man, but God. To say *Amen* to that prayer which we understand not, what is it but to offer the sacrifice of fools? Holy matter in prayer is the incense to be offered, the tongue is the Censour: but the affections of the devout soul bring the fire to the incense, before it can ascend as a sweet perfume into the nostrils of God. Now if the intellect want light to understand what the matter of the prayer is, the affections must either be cold, or wild, and wild-fire is unfit

to

to offer up the incense of prayer with. It is not enough that the praying soul be touched with some devout affections, but that these affections be suitable to the matter of the prayer, yea, arise from the sense it hath thereof.

Sect. II.

THe second Question is, Whether a Set-form of prayer be lawful to be used in the Church?

If it be unlawful, it is, because by the use of a set-form in prayer some command of God is transgressed; for where there is no law, there is no transgression.

Now it will trouble those who decry all set forms (how holy soever the matter of them be) to shew any command upon Scripture-record that forbids the praying by a Set-form, or that disallows its use, either in expres terms, or by necessary consequence. It will be granted, yea must, that the Scripture is a perfect rule in this particular duty of Gods worship, as well as in other. But among all the precepts and rules in the Book of God, we find none that commands we should pray by a conceived form, and not by a set form. We are commanded *who to pray to*, to God, and none other, *Psal.* 44. 20. *In whose name we are to pray*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. *Ephes.* 5. 20. we are bound up to the matter of our prayer, *what we are to ask*, 1 *Joh.* 5. 14. and lastly in what manner we are to pray, we must pray *with understanding*, *Joh.* 4. 22. 1 *Cor.* 14. 16. *Heb.* 11. 6. *In faith*, *Jam.* 1. 6. *Heb.* 11. 4. with sincere *fervency*, *Jer.* 29. 12. In a word, which comprehends all in one, we are to pray *in the spirit*, *Ephes.* 6. in the *holy Ghost*, *Jude vers.* 20. Now he that can do all this, need not fear but he prays lawfully, and consequently acceptably. And we must confess this may be done by one that prayeth with a set form, or else we must very boldly charge many eminent Saints in Scripture for praying unlawfully. Who dares say that *Solomon* praised God unlawfully, when he used the very form which *David* his father had penned? or that *Moses* did not pray in the spirit, because he prayed in a constant form at the setting forward of the *Ark*, and at its setting down again? Thus you have seen what God hath prescribed to our praying acceptably; and

if it had been of such dangerous consequence to have prayed by a set form, as to make our prayers abominable, would God have omitted to warn his people of it, especially when he fore-saw that his Churches generally in their Assemblies would make use of them, as they have done for thirteen or fourteen hundred years? But may we not rather, yea undoubtedly we ought conclude, that seeing the Lord in his Word descends not to prescribe what the outward frame and order of our words in prayer should be, whether conceived *ex tempore*, or cast into a form before hand, (onely gives general rules, that all things should be done decently, that we be not rash with our mouth, or our heart hasty to utter any thing before God, and such like, that are applicable to both) I say we should conclude, both are lawful and warrantable, the Scripture having determined neither the one way nor the other: And therefore to put Religion in one, so as to condemn the other as unlawful, looks (as a learned holy Pen hath it) too like superstition, seeing God himself hath laid no bond upon the conscience either way. As for the excellency of conceived prayer, wherein the devout Christian out of the abundance of his heart pours out his requests to God, none but a prophane spirit dares open his mouth against it. But is there no way to magnifie the excellency of that, but by villifying and imputing sin to the other? alas! the evil is not in a form, but in formality, and that is a disease that may be found in him that prays with a conceived prayer. A man may pray without a form, and yet not pray without formality. Though I confess he that binds himself constantly to a set form (especially in his private addresses) seems to me to be more in danger of the two to fall under the power of that lazy distemper. But to hasten the dispatch of this Question, (for I intend not a full discourse of this point, but would top a few heads onely, which you may find more largely insisted on in many worthy Treatises on this subject) I would desire those that scruple the lawfulness of all set forms, to look wishly upon those set forms of blessing prayers and thanksgiving that are upon cripture-record, and were used by the servants of God with his approbation, and then consider whether God would prescribe or accept what is unlawful? The *Priests* had a form of blessing the people, *Numb.* 6. 23. *Moses* used (as I hinted) a form of prayer at the remove of the Ark, *Rise up, Lord,*

Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee: and when it was set down another form, *Return, O Lord, unto the thousands of Israel, Numb.* 10. 35. which very form was continued and used by *David, Psal.* 68. 1. *Asaph* and his brethren had set forms of thanksgiving given them to use in their publick service, 1 *Chron.* 16, 17. *On that day David delivered first this Psalm to thank the Lord, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.* This was the first he appointed to be sung in the publick service, the several parts whereof were afterwards much enlarged, as you may see by comparing the 105 *Psalm* with the former part of the song in the place fore-quoted, and *Psalm* 96 with the latter part of it. At the *Dedication* of the *Temple, Solomon* used the very form of words in praising God which his father had penned, 2 *Chron.* 7. 6. Good *Hezekiah* commands the *Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David,* 2 *Chron.* 29. 30. This holy man no doubt was able to have poured forth extemporary praises, as it is thought he did in that prayer which he on the sudden put up upon the occasion of that railing Letter sent him, 2 *King.* 19. 14. yet did not think it unlawful to use a form in this publick administration. Yea, our blessed Saviour, an instance beyond all instances, both gave a form of prayer to his Disciples, and himself disdained not to pray three several times one after another the very same form of words, *Matth.* 26. 44. *He left them, and went again and prayed the third time, saying the same words.* And that *Hymn* which he sung with his Disciples is conceived by the Learned to be that portion of Psalms which the *Jews* used at the celebration of the *Passover*: see *Beza* and *Gerhard Harmo. in locum.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIII.

This Head of Publick Prayer briefly improved.

5. I Come now to the fifth thing propounded in profecution of this head of publick Prayer, and that is Applicatory.

SECT. I.

Vſe 1. First, This ſhews, what reaſon the people of God (where ever they live) have to pray for good Magiſtrates, eſpecially Kings and Princes: *Regna ſunt hoſpitia Eccleſiæ*, as the Inn is to the Traveller, ſo Kingdoms are to the Church in its pilgrimage here on earth. As they are, ſuch is it uſage in the world, and entertainment that it finds. *Pray for Kings* (ſaith the *Apoſtle*) *and all in authority, that we may lead peaceable and quiet lives in all godlineſs and honeſty*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 2. By godlineſs he means in an eſpecial manner the free profeſſion of the Truth, and publick exerciſe of Gods pure worſhip. No Magiſtrate can hinder the Saints living godly, as to the embracing of the truth in their hearts, and ſecret performance of prayer. *Daniel* would and could pray, do *Nebuchadnezzar* his worſt. But Princes carry the keys of the Church-doors at their girdles, and can ſhut or open them. When faithful Magiſtrates ſway the Scepter, then the ways to *Zion* are eaſie and open; when enemies to the ways and worſhip of God bear rule, then they mourn; Church doors are ſhut, and Priſon-doors opened to the ſervants of Chriſt: Then the Woman flies into the Wilderneſs, and the Church into private Chambers, as we find in the Apoſtles days, when the Church was met with the doors ſhut to pray for *Peter*. O pray for Kings and Princes, for

as

as they carry the keys of the Church doors, so God carries the key that opens the doors of their hearts at his pleasure.

SECT. II.

IT reproves those that turn their backs off the publick worship; now they are of two sorts, the prophane Atheist, the scrupulous Separatist. 2.

First, the irreligious Atheist, such who out of a prophane spirit turn their back off the publick worship of God. The *Jews* have a saying of one of their *Rabbies* much in their mouthes, *Quisquis incolit civitatem in quâ extat Synagoga, & mihi non precatur, is est qui merito dicitur vicinus malus*: He that dwells in a City where there is a Synagogue, and comes not to prayers there, he is the person that deserves the name of a bad neighbour. How many bad neighbours do we alas live among, who are seldom seen in the publick Assembly from one end of the year to the other? Many live, as if they had rent the bond that was sealed at their Baptism, and renounced all homage to their Maker, and would tell the world they owe him no worship. Worse bruits these are than the hog in their stie, or horse in their stable. They were made for our use, and accordingly serve us; Man was intended for the service of his Maker, a creature made for Religion, by which some would define and distinguish the human nature from that of bruites, rather than by his rational faculty, indeed in some bruits there is a sagacity, that looks something like mans discoursive faculty: But Religion is a thing their nature is wholly incapable of, and therefore nothing makes man so truly a bruit as irreligion. The *Jewish Talmud* propounds this Question, Why God made man *vesperà Sabbathi*? and gives this as one reason, *Vt protinus intraret in præceptum*. That is, God made man on the evening just before the Sabbath, that he might forthwith enter upon the observation of the command to sanctifie the Sabbath, and begin his life as it were with the worship of God, which was the chief end why it was given him. May we not therefore wonder at the patience of God in suffering these ungodly wretches to live, that by casting this horrid contempt upon his worship, walk contrary to the very end of their creation? If the bells which 1.

call us to the worship of God, were to give them notice of a Wrestling, Foot-ball, or drunken Wake, O how soon should we have them flock together? but prayers and Sermons they care not for. What shall we impute this irreligion and atheism of multitudes among us to? surely it proceeds from a criminous conscience. It is said of *Cain*, *He went out from the presence of the Lord*, *Gen.* 4. 16. that is, say some Interpreters from that place, where God had his Church and Worship, there God is especially present. Guilt indeed makes men afraid of God. This makes them what they can to wear off the thoughts of a Deity that are so troublesome to their flagitious consciences; now to do this, they have no other way than to shun those duties which will bring God and their sins to their remembrance. *Herod* was soon perswaded to cut off that head, whose tongue was so bold to tell him of his faults: And prophane hearts are easily drawn to cast off those duties, which will gaul and rub hard upon their sore consciences. But that man is in a miserable case, that knows no way to get ease, but by throwing away the plaister that must heal his wound. Ah poor wretches! this will not serve your turn. What though the Prisoner stops his ears, and will not hear the Judge pronounce the Sentence against him, will that save him from the Gallows? Surely no, but rather procure his being sent thither the sooner, for his contempt of the Court, who had he carried himself better, and humbly begg'd his life at the Judges hand, might possibly have got the sentence reversed. Whether sinners will hear the Word or no, come to his Worship or no, God will proceed in his work. Flouting against God, and turning thy back on his Worship, is not the way to prevent but hasten divine vengeance. How much better were it to make thy humble supplication to thy Judge, and wait at the posts of wisdom. While men, though bad, wait on Ordinances, there is hope, for they are under the means; but when they cast them off, then their ruine hastens.

2. The scrupulous Separatist, such who do not absent from the publick worship out of a prophane atheistical spirit, as the former, but from some scruples, whether they may lawfully be present at the prayers there put up, because there are some male administrations in the performance of it, or at least which they think to be such; at these they are distasted, and so withdraw: May be it is because the duty of prayer is performed with a set form, which

which they conceive unlawful. This I shall wave, having spoken already to it. Or may be it is not a form, but some passages in the form used that offends them, and therefore they dare not be present. So that the question will be,

Whether it be lawful to be present at that service, or those prayers in the Congregation, that have something faulty in them? *Quest.*

To the answering of this question, we must *first* distinguish of faults, all are not of a size: There are faults in the matter, and faults in the form and method of a prayer; and faults in the matter may be either fundamental, or of a less nature, such as are not fundamental, nor bordering thereupon; and those less faults may be generally dispersed through the prayer, that it is soured throughout with them, or onely in some particular passages. *Secondly*, We must distinguish between approving of the faults, defects, and corruptions that are in a prayer, and being present at the service of God, where some things are done faultily. Now I answer, That it is lawful for a Christian to be present at those prayers, wherein some things may be supposed to be faulty for outward form, yea, and also in matter, in things not fundamental, nor bordering thereupon, and these not dispersed through the whole body of the prayers, but in some passages onely. We may be present, where God is present by his grace and favour. We may follow the Lamb safely wherever he goes. Now God doth not for corruptions of doctrine, that are remote from the foundation, or of worship, in things ritual, and of an inferiour nature, cast off a Church, and with-draw his presence from it; neither ought we. Indeed, if the foundation of doctrine be destroyed, and the worship become idolatrous; in that case God goes before us, and calls all the faithful after him to come out from the communion of such a Church. But where corruptions in a Church are of the former nature, and such Laws be not imposed by the Church in their communion with it, as bring a necessity of approving things unlawful, the sin is not in holding communion with it, but in withdrawing from it, and that no little one neither. Many things must be tollerated for maintaining peace and unity, and enjoying the Worship of God, when it is not in our power to redress them. Neither doth our presence at the Ordinance carry interpretatively a consent with it of

all that is there done. It is one thing to tollerate, and another to approve. Who ever said, that all who are present in an Assembly, by it shew their consent to every impertinent phrase in the Ministers prayer, corrupt gloss, or false interpretation he makes of any Text quoted in his Sermon? If this were true, our Saviour led the people into a snare, when he bade them beware of the leaven of the Pharisees Doctrine, yet bade them hear them preach, *Matth.* 23. 3.

SECT. III.

Use 3. OF Exhortation. First, Make conscience of joyning with the Church in her publick worship. Do not think thou art left to thy liberty whether thou wilt or not, but bind it upon thy conscience as a duty, for so indeed it is. You think it is the Ministers duty to dispence Ordinances, surely then it is your duty to attend on them. He might as well pray for you at home, as come to Church and not find his people there. Is there a woe to him if he doth not provide food for your souls, and none for you if you come not to partake of it? how can you reasonably think so? And when you come, think not you are time enough there, if you get to the Sermon, though you miss the prayers, which should prepare you for the Word, and sanctifie the Word to you. It is not the way to profit by one Ordinance, to neglect another. The Minister may preach, but God must teach thee to profit. If God opens not thy understanding to conceive of, and thy heart to conceive by the Word thou heareſt, no fruit will come of it. Now Prayer is the key to open Gods heart, as his Spirit the key to open thine. *Secondly*, Take heed how thou comeſt to, and behaveſt thy self, as in other parts of publick worship, so especially in Prayer. *First*, how thou comeſt to publick worship, take heed thou comeſt not in thy filthiness, I mean, that thou regard not iniquity in thy heart. Wash, and then pray; so *David* resolves, *I will wash my hands in innocency, and so compass thine altar*, alluding to the Priests that went to the Laver before they approach'd with their sacrifice to the Altar, *Exod.* 40. It was counted a great presumption in one, that he durst come near his Prince with a stinking breath; O what a bold act then is it to draw

draw near to the great God with any ſin upon thee? this is ſure to make thy breath in Prayer ſtink, and render thee for it abominable to him. *Secondly*, How thou behaveſt thy ſelf in the duty, be ſure it be with a holy reverence; *firſt*, with an inward reverence. God is called the *Fear* of his People, becauſe he is reverenced by them in their approaches to him. *Fear*, it is put for the whole worſhip of God, becauſe no part of it to be done without a holy trembling; this, as the Quaver to the Muſick, gives a grace and acceptableneſs both to our Prayers and Praiſes alſo; *Serve the Lord with fear, rejoyce with trembling*. Now to fill thee with awful thoughts of God, labour to ſet up a right Notion of God in thy mind, as infinitely glorious in Holineſs, Majeſty, and Power. Irreverence is the product of low thoughts we have of a perſon, which makes it impoſſible, that an ignorant ſoul ſhould truly reverence God (how humble ſoever his outward poſture is) becauſe he knows not what God is. A Prince in a diſguiſe is not known, and therefore not entertained where he comes, as when he appears in his Royal Majeſty. The Saints uſe to awe their hearts into a reverence of God in Prayer, by revolving his Titles of Majeſty in their thoughts, *Pſal.*89.6,7. *Secondly*, Outward reverence. God is a Spirit, yet will have the reverence of our body as well as Spirit, for both are his; and eſpecially in the publick. A Prince would not like a rude behaviour from his ſervant in his Bed-chamber, where none beſides himſelf is witneſs to it; but much leſs will he bear it in his Preſence-chamber, as he ſits on his Throne before many of his Subjects. Now the fitteſt geſture of body in publick Prayer to expreſs our reverence, is kneeling: *Come let us worſhip, fall down, and kneel before the Lord*, Pſa.95.6. So *Paul* taking his leave of the Elders of *Epheſus*, kneeled, and prayed with them all, *Act.*20. 36. And all the Chriſtians at *Tyrus* accompanying *Paul* to the ſhip, with their wives and children, *kneeled down on the ſhore, and prayed*, Acts 21. where that cannot be done, they ſhould ſtand (if debility of nature hinder not:) As for ſitting, we do not find it commended in Scripture, as a praying poſture; neither have the Churches of Chriſt judg'd it ſo: *Sedentem orare extra Diſciplinam eſt*, ſaith *Tertullian*, To pray ſitting, is not according to the Churches order; as for that, 2 *Sam.*7.18. *David ſate before the Lord*; It may be read, he abode or ſtay'd before the Lord: So the word in other places is taken; as, *Gen.*27.44. *Levit.*44.8. 1 *Sam.*1.22. *Thirdly*, Attention and Intention of mind, that they may go along with the Miniſter by their

their devout affections, and witness their consent to the prayers put up, with their hearty *Amen* at the end of them, 1 *Chron.*16.36. *Nehem.*8.6.1 *Cor.*14.16. Or else indeed they are as a broken string in a Consort, that speaks not with the rest, and thereby discomposeth the Harmony.

CHAP. XLIV.

Of Extraordinary Prayer, its nature, and by whom to be performed.

THE last sort of Prayer (as to the manner of performing it) is *Extraordinary Prayer*; for the dispatch of which, I shall endeavour to answer these five Questions.

1. What Extraordinary Prayer is?
2. By whom it is to be performed?
3. What are the special Seasons wherein we are to take it up?
4. Why Extraordinary Prayer is super-added to Ordinary?
5. What counsel or direction may be given for the acceptable and successful performance of this duty.

Quest. 1. What is Extraordinary Prayer?

SECT. I.

Answ. PRayer may be called Extraordinary in a double respect: 1. In regard of the Time set apart for the performance of it; then it is extraordinary, when some more than ordinary portion of time is set apart and devoted to this work. Thus we find *Jacob* wrestling till break of day, *Gen.*32. and *Joshua* with the *Elders* of *Israel* till Eventide; the one probably spending the night, the other the day in this duty. And *Israel* (in their War with *Benjamin*) *wept, and sate before the Lord that day till Even*, Judg.20. We find *Daniel* many days together in prayer, *Dan.*10.12. 2. In regard of its Adjunct. Then prayer is Extraordinary when Fasting is joyned to the duty of prayer; now Fasting is a Religious abstinence, whereby we forbear the use of

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all earthly comforts in the time set apart for this duty, (so far as necessity and decency will permit) the more to afflict our souls, and enforce our prayers: As first, a forbearing of food, whether meat or drink, *Est.* 4. 16. *Jon.* 3. 7. from this, the whole action is called a Fast, which imports not a sober use of food, for this we are at all times bound to observe, but a total abstinence, if necessity of nature through some debility and infirmity doth not require otherwise; for in this case, the less duty must yield to the greater: The end of fasting being to help us in prayer, which it doth not when nature faints under it; for the soul cannot flie, if the wings of our bodily spirits flag. *Secondly*, All costly apparel, and ornaments of the body; gaudy rich clothes on a fast-day do no better, than a light trimming on a mourning suit. *Exod.* 33. 4. *They mourned, and no man put on his ornaments*; and this was by Gods own command, *vers.* 4. *For the Lord had said to Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, that they put off their ornaments.* In a word, all carnal mirth, musick, perfumes, and what ever might recreate and delight the senses, are to be forborn upon this extraordinary occasion. See *Dan.* 6. 18. *Dan.* 10. 2, 3. For though abstinence from food, with the other severities imposed on the outward man, be not in themselves acts of worship, nor intrinsecal to the nature of prayer, yet are they required in the extraordinary performance of this duty by way of adjuvancy to it, and they have a reference to spiritual ends. *First*, By this abstinence we acknowledge our unworthiness to enjoy such comforts, and that God may justly take from us, what for a time we voluntarily deny our selves of. *Secondly*, We express by our outward abstinence and fasting, the strength and vehemency of those inward affections which are to be exerted in extraordinary prayer. Men use to signifie the violent passions of their soul, by forbearing the repast and delights of the body. Is it a passion of grief one is oppressed with? you will see him oft forsake his food; thus *David*, *Psal.* 102. 4. *My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread.* Is it fear that possesseth the heart, with the apprehension of some great danger impending and approaching? you will have such a one refuse his wonted repast; so the Mariners did in the Sea-storm, *Act.* 27. Is it anger that vexeth a man? *Ahab* was deep in this passion upon the denial of *Naboth*'s vinyard, and he throws himself on his

his bed, and will not eat, 1 *King.* 21. Is it desire of compassing any great design that the head and heart is taken up and transported with? such a one will not allow himself time for his meal; *Cursed be he* (saith *Saul*) *that eateth any bread till evening, that I may be avenged of mine enemies*, 1 *Sam.* 14. 24. We find the Smith in the *Prophet* so earnest at his idolatrous work, that he pincheth himself with hunger, and he will not eat though his strength faileth, nor drink though he be ready to faint, *Isa.* 44. 12. Now in extraordinary Prayer, the Christian is to have all these affections in a spiritual and holy manner, wound up to the highest key possible; he is to have a deep sorrow for sin, fear and trembling at the judgments of God feared to come for them, an holy anger and indignation against sin, with a vehement desire to be revenged on it for the dishonor it hath cast upon God; and, in a word, a longing desire to make his peace with God, and recover his favour, which sin hath unhappily deprived him of. Now because the excess of natural passions discovers it self this way, even to afflict their very bodies, and makes them deny themselves that which nature most craves, therefore God will have his people in their extraordinary humiliations do the same, that nature may not put grace to shame. *Thirdly*, By this abstinence, especally from food, we tame and subdue our wanton flesh, and so come to have a greater advantage for mortifying those sensual lusts, that receive the fuel which feeds and inflames them from the flesh. A full body is a mellow soil for such lusts to grow ranck in. *Cum carne nutriuntur vitia carnis*; The lusts of the flesh are nourished when the body is pampered. If the body be kept high, carnal lusts will not easily be kept low. What else made *Paul* to beat down his body by fasting and watching, in which he was often? but that he might have the fuller blow at those lusts that received strength from it. *Nostrum est lasciviens jumentum frænis mediæ subjugare, ut fessorem Spiritum sanctum moderato & composito portet incessu, Hieronimus Epist.* 9. Indeed a pampered horse is most like to cast his Rider. And the holy Spirit using the body as well as soul in the work, this bridle of fasting is of excellent use to curb it. *Fourthly*, This abstinence from food is required to sharpen our spirits, and enliven the powers of the soul in this duty, which are pressed down and thickned (as I may so say) with the charge of the stomack. A full body makes a heavy

heavie eye, and drouſie ſpirits, and what can then be expected but yawning prayers, eſpecially when we are to continue longer than ordinary at the work?

Sect. II.

Queſt. 2. Who are they that are called to the practice of this duty of extraordinary Prayer?

Anſw. The command comprehends all that by age are enabled to underſtand the nature of this duty, when any extraordinary occaſion occurs for the performance of the ſame. We find it required of a Church and Nation. It is the *Magiſtrates* duty, when there is a National cauſe, to call his ſubjects to the publick practice of this duty, *Joel* 2. 15. *Neh.* 9. 1. and he that refuſeth his call thereunto makes himſelf an offender both to God and man, *Levit.* 23. 29. It reacheth to private families, *Eſter* and her *Maidens* keep a Religious faſt together, *Eſt.* 4. 16. yea, it is a duty bound upon ſingle perſons, and reacheth to the ſecret cloſſet, *Matth.* 6. 16. *But thou when thou faſteſt, anoint thy head, and waſh thy face, that thou appear not unto men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret.* The circumſtances of the place ſhew, it is meant of a ſecret faſt in the cloſſet. We have them all together in one place, *Zech.* 12. 12. *The land ſhall mourn*, there is a National faſt; *Every family apart, the houſe of David apart, and the houſe of Nathan apart, &c.* there is Domeſtical; *and their wives apart*, there is a perſonal ſecret faſt in the cloſſet.

Object. But is not this extraordinary Prayer and Faſting too auſtere and rigid a duty for Goſpel-Times? Where doth Chriſt command his people in Goſpel-times to macerate their bodies with ſuch ſeverities as theſe? Joy and praiſe better becomes the freedom and liberty of the Goſpel.

Anſw. Such wild ſtuff hath been vented by ſome in our late looſe times. Theſe are a new ſort of Saints, which the world hath hardly been acquainted with before theſe unhappy days of ours; they would be in Heaven before their time, and leave no tears upon their cheeks for Chriſt at death to wipe away. If any of theſe could live without ſin and ſuffering, they would have ſome colour for

their plea; though even then, being yet *in the body*, they should owe those tears to their brethren, which they need not drop for themselves. The *Apostle* I am sure bids us *Weep with those that weep, and mourn with those that mourn.* Thus did *Nehemiah* fast for his afflicted brethren in *Jerusalem*, when his own affairs were prosperous enough (being surrounded with the beams of the *Persian Emperors* favour.) But there are none in mortal flesh free from sin, or exempted from sorrow; and therefore a mourning habit may sometimes become the best of Saints on earth. *They that wear soft clothing are in Kings houses, Matth.* 11. 8. Glorified Saints, who dwell in the King of Heavens Court, are always clad with joy, but this on earth is the Saints Holy-day suit; as he hath now and then his rejoycing days, so he wants not his days for mourning. *The days will come* (saith our *Saviour* of his *Disciples*) *when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast, Matth.* 9. 15. and surely they lived in Gospel-times. If these merry Professors had been by *Paul*, to see him how he beat down his body, and chastised himself with fasting, they surely would have chid him for his pains, and thought him ignorant of his Christian liberty. The worst I wish these poor deluded souls, is, that they who are so much for joy here, meet with no mourning in another world. It is but an ill sign, when men quarrel with a duty for its strictness, and slip the yoke off their necks because the wanton flesh saith it is uneasie. These are like *Ephraim*, whom the *Prophet* compares to an *Heifer that loveth to tread the corn*, but not to plough, that is hard hungry work. A thanksgiving day, that brings a feast with it, this they like, and are content it should pass for a Gospel-duty; but a day of prayer and fasting, wherein they are to pinch their carcase a little, this will not go down. But is there no feast except that which goes down the throat, and fills the belly? Certainly this blessed duty deserves not the ill name it hath given unto it by men of sensual spirits. It is indeed to carnal wretches a heavy yoke, a tedious work. As the *milch kine* that carried the *Ark* went bellowing for their calves that were taken from them, so do these in a fast day after their employments and enjoyments of the world, from which they are for that time restrained. Alas! poor creatures, as the Ark was nothing but a burthen to the kine, so the duty is no other to them. But the true Saints, that knows what

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eaſe his poor heart feels in exonerating his conſcience by humble confeſſion of ſin, what ſweet ſatisfaction his ſoul meets with in communion with God, and what faith and inward peace he carries away with him from the duty, will give you another character of this Ordinance than ſo; he will tell you He had rather be faſting with God, than feaſting at a Kings table. What Saint had not rather be fatting on the Mount with *Moſes*, than eating and playing with the carnal *Iſraelites* below the hill? Who would not miſs a meal for his body, to ſatiate his ſoul with thoſe delights, that the preſence of God in ſuch an Ordinance affords? Who would not take pleaſure in mourning and weeping for ſin, to have the tears he ſheds dried up with kiſſes from his Saviour's mouth? It is indeed to him that ſtands ſucking of the buſh (I mean the external part of the duty) a dry ſapleſs ſervice, but to him that is taken into the Wine-cellar, and there drinks full draughts of the love of God, it is a moſt ſweet ſoul-raviſhing Ordinance. The lower exterior part of the duty, like the bottom of *Jacobs Ladder*, ſtands on the earth, and leaves the creature on the earth alſo where it found him; for *bodily exerciſe profits little.* But the top and ſpiritual part of it reacheth to heaven, and mounts the gracious ſoul thither, even unto boſom-communion with God. There is as much difference between a Saint, and a hypocrite or carnal ſoul in this duty, as there is between a Thief lock'd up with his Keeper in a Priſon, and a Schollar locking up himſelf in his Study, to read ſome book that he is greatly delighted with; to the one it is a grievous burden, to the other an incomparable pleaſure.

CHAP. XLV.

The seasons for Extraordinary Prayer.

Quest. 3. WHat are the special seasons wherein the Christian is to take up the practice of this duty of Extraordinary Prayer?

Answ. I answer, first, in general, Any extraordinary occasion, as it emergeth in the course of Providence in the Christians life. This kind of prayer is not of constant use as ordinary prayer is; this is food, that physick, and it were absurd to be taking physick all the year long. Which shews the folly of the *Papists* in their fasts, which are holden at set times, whether affairs be prosperous or not prosperous, ordinary or extraordinary. I would not be thought here to speak against set-Fasts, we have had our monthly Fasts, but the extraordinary cause for which they were appointed continued. But to instance in a few special seasons, wherein the Christian hath a fit occasion to make use of this extraordinary duty.

SECT. I.

1. FIrst, when he is to set upon any more than an ordinary enterprise, wherein he may meet with great difficulty or danger, and the issue whereof will be a great mercy or affliction. Now is a fit season to take up this extraordinary duty, as an excellent means whereby all mountains of intervening difficulties may be levell'd, and his undertaking crowned with happy success. Thus *Ester*, before she adventured upon that heroick attempt of going uncalled into the *King*'s presence, to beg the life of her *People*, given

given to the Butchery and slaughter by the Kings Seal, at bloody *Haman*'s request (an action that carried death and danger on the face of it) she first goes to God by fasting and prayer, and gets all the auxiliary forces of others prayers she can, and attended with this convoy, she, against the *Persian Law*, presents her self before the King, and speeds; for instead of losing her own life, which was forfeited by the Law for this attempt, she reverseth the unjust judgment past upon the life of her people, and recoyls it upon the head of him that laid the plot. Prayer had so unlock'd and opened the Kings heart, that she hath but what she asks at the Kings hands. No such Engine to facilitate and carry on any great design to its desired end, as this of extraordinary Prayer. Who could have believed that *Ezra* and his company of pilgrims should all get safe from *Babylon* to *Jerusalem*, being so generally hated every where? Now what stratagem doth this Leader of his people use to secure his passage, and scape the fury of his enemies? doth he desire a band of the *Persian King* to be their guard? No, he hath gloried so much of that God they served, that he is ashamed the King should think now he was not willing to cast himself upon his protection; but he goes to fasting and prayer, *Ezr.* 8. 21. then they take their march, and find the way all along cleared before them, *vers.* 31. Our blessed Saviour hath sanctified this duty for this end in his own holy example, who when to chuse and send forth the *Twelve* to preach the Gospel, that they may speed the better in their Embassy, he sends them forth under the conduct of prayer, and to that end spends the preceding night himself in prayer, *Luk.* 6. 12, 13. Now though every Christian is not called forth (or likely to be in all his life) to such great and publick enterprises as some others are, yet if he will observe the several passages of his more private employments, and turns of providence in the course of his life, he shall find many such actions occur, as give him a fair hint to make use of this duty. Haply thou art to enter upon a calling, or in the calling thou art meetest with many difficulties and temptations. Thou hast a long journey, or dangerous voyage to take; thou hast to do with a subtle potent adversary, though thy cause be good, yet like to be out-witted or over-born. Here is a fair errand put into thy mouth to go before the Lord for counsel, assistance, and protection. May be thou hast children, and these are

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to be disposed of into callings, or new relations; and is not this a great undertaking, wherein thou hast a great adventure going in their bottom? Will not the issue that depends upon this great change of their condition, lay the foundation of much grief or joy to thee? Yet how slighty are many herein, as if it were of little more importance to marry a child, than it is to put off a horse or cow at a fair? few matches are alas thus made in heaven, I mean, by solemn prayer engaging God in the business. *Abrahams* servant puts many parents to shame, he hard at prayer for success in his journey, when sent to take a wife for his Masters son, and not they for their children. But I wonder not that they, who propound low and carnal ends to themselves in such enterprizes, should forget by prayer both to ask his counsel in the match, or invite him to offer his blessing at the wedding.

Sect. II.

2. When the Christian is in the dark concerning any truth, and cannot satisfie his judgment by humble and diligent enquiry he hath made after it; now is a fit season to take up this extraordinary duty, as an excellent means to be led into the knowledge of the mind of God therein. Prayer is the proper key to unlock Gods heart, and he alone can open our understandings, and satisfie our scruples. This course *Daniel* took, and got more understanding by his fasting and prayer, than by all his study, for a messenger is sent from heaven *to give him skill and understanding*, *Dan.* 9. 20, 21, 22, 23. and again, *chap.* 10. 12. in both he sped: And the *Angel* is careful to let him know, that it was his extraordinary praying that procured this extraordinary favour, and also how acceptable his motion was, by the easie access, and quick dispatch it found with God; and therefore tells him in both, that he had no sooner set upon this course of afflicting his soul, but he was heard, and the messenger ordered to give him an answer to his prayer. Surely prayer hath not lost its credit in heaven, but is now as welcom to God as ever; and though an Angel be not the messenger to bring the Saint an answer, yet he shall have it by as sure and more honourable hand,

hand, even the holy Spirit, whose office is to lead his people into truth. Thus *Cornelius*, *Act.* 10. came to be instructed in the mystery of the Gospel, upon his extraordinary seeking of God by fasting and prayer. It is very probable this good man in those divided times, wherein he saw many zealous for the old way of *Jewish* worship, and others preach up a new way, stood in some doubt what to do; and this might stir him up by fasting and prayer to ask counsel, and beg further light of God to direct him in the way of truth, as may seem by the tenor of the message sent him from God in the vision while he was at prayer, which bad him *send to Joppa for one Simon whose name is Peter, and he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do, verf.* 5, 6. And certainly in our divided times, wherein there is so much difference in judgment, had there been less wrangling among our selves, and more wrestling with God for his teaching Spirit, we had been in a fairer way to find the door of truth, which so many are yet groping for. The way of controversies is dusty, and contentious disputes raiseth this dust, and blows it most into their eyes that gallop fastest in it, so that they miss the truth, which humble souls find upon their knees at the Throne of grace. When the *Apostles* were quarrelling, then they got nothing from Christ but a chiding, *Luk.* 22. 14, *&c.* but when they were praying together earnestly, then he sent the Spirit to teach them, *Act.* 2.

Sect. III.

WHen the Christian is under any great affliction. Now is a fit season if he be able for the work: *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray, Jam.* 5. that is, let him then be more then ordinary in this duty; for he must, yea, will, if a Christian, pray when he is not afflicted as well as when he is: But the meaning is, he must now pray after an extraordinary manner, he must now pray with more vehemency; for though in all our addresses to God, we are to express the lively workings of our hearts to God, without which, our prayers are unsavoury, (cold prayers ever find cold welcom.) Yet God expects, and it hath been always 3.

ways the care of holy men, in their extraordinary applications to this duty of prayer, to wind up their affections to a pitch higher then ordinary, having the advantage of some special occasion to help them thereunto. Look upon them in some great strait and affliction, and you shall find them exceeding themselves, and put upon them a Prince-like spirit; so *Jacob* behaved himself in prayer, *Gen.* 32. 28. as a Prince fighting in the field for his Crown and Kingdom, he wrestled with the Angel, who was no other then God himself; that is, he streined, as it were, every vein in his heart, and put forth his whole might in prayer, as a wrestler would do that graples with a potent adversary. *Moses* is so transported in zeal for *Israel*, when a dismal clowd of wrath impended them for their idolatry, that he offers rather to die upon the place, than to go down the Mount, and not carry the joyful news of a pardon with him, *Exod.* 32. 32. And *Nehemiah*, when he had been afflicting his soul, and praying before the Lord, it was with such vehemency, that the anguish of his spirit look out at his eyes, and left a mark of sorrow upon his very countenance, which his Prince could observe as he waited on him. *Again*, In affliction we are called to pray, as more intensively, so more extensively; I mean, longer and oftner. Thus I find that ἐκτενέστερον προσηύχετο of our Saviour, rendred by *Lucas Brugensis* and others, *prolixius orabat*, he prayed longer, that is, he spent more time than ordinary in it. Thrice one after another we find him at it, *Matth.* 26. 44. His agony was great, and the waves of his affliction violent, and therefore he doubles, yea, trebles his prayer, with deep sighes and strong cries to his Father. Nature never streins so to its utmost, as when it is oppressed, then temples work, lungs heave, and heart pants; so in affliction the spirit of prayer should be encreased and intended.

SECT. IV.

4. FOurthly, when the Christian is buffeted with any temptation, or over-powered with a corruption, and cannot with the use of ordinary means quench the one, or master and mortifie the other. If the short dagger of ordinary prayer will not reach the heart of a lust, then 'tis time to draw out this long sword of ex-

extraordinary prayer upon it. There is a *kind of devils*, our Saviour tells us, *that goes not out but by prayer and fasting*, *Matth.* 17. 21. you know the occasion of this speech was that complaint of one concerning his Lunatick son, *I brought him to thy disciples and they could not cure him.* Thus some poor souls complain, they have come to the Word preached so long, in their daily prayers begg'd power over such a lust, resolved against it many a time, and none of these means could cure it, what can they now do more? Here thou art told; bring thy condition to Christ in this solemn Ordinance of prayer and fasting, this hath at last been the happy means to strengthen many a poor Christian to be avenged on those spiritual enemies, which have out-braved all the former, and like *Sampson* to pull down the devils house upon his head.

Sect. V.

5. When sin doth abound more than ordinary in the times and places we live in. Sinning times have ever been the Saints praying times; this sent *Ezra* with a heavy heart to confess the sin of his people, and to bewail their abominations before the Lord, *Ezr.* 9. And *Jeremy* tells the wicked rout of his degenerate age, that his *soul should weep in secret for their pride*, *Jer.* 13. Indeed sometimes sin comes to such a heighth and insolence, that this is almost all the godly can do, to get into a corner and bewail the general pollutions of the present age; as he told *Luther*, *Abi frater in cellam & dic miserere Domine. If the foundations of the earth be destroyed, what can the righteous do? Psal.* 11. Such dismal days of National confusion our eyes have seen, when foundations of Government were destroyed, and all hurl'd into a military confusion: When it is thus with a people, what can the righteous do? Yes, this they may, and should do, *Fast and pray.* There is yet a God in heaven to be sought to, when a peoples deliverance is thrown beyond the help of human policy or power. Now is the fit time to make their appeal to God, as the words following hint, *vers.* 4. *The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lords throne is in heaven*; in which words, God is presented sitting in

heaven as a Temple, for their encouragement (I conceive) in such a desperate state of affairs, to direct their prayers thither for deliverance. And certainly this hath been the engine that hath been above any instrumental, to screw up this poor Nation again, and set it upon the foundation of that lawful Government, from which it was so dangerously slid.

SECT. VI.

6. Sixthly, to name no more, Times of great expectation are times for extraordinary prayer; when the people of God have been big with expectation of great mercies approaching, then have they been more abounding in prayer. As the Cocks crow thickest towards break of day, so the Saints, the nearer they have apprehended the accomplishment of promises made to his Church, the more instant they use to be in prayer. When a woman with child her reckoning is neer out, then she desires her Midwife to be at hand. And prayer hath had the name of old for its excellent usefulness to obstetricate mercies. *The children are come to the birth*, (said good *Hezekiah*) and then he desires the help of the *Prophets* prayer for the fair delivery of it, *Lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left. Isa.* 37. 5. When *Daniel* the *Prophet* had learn'd by study, that the happy period of the seventy years captivity (bound upon the *Jews* neck for their sin) was now at hand, *Dan* 9. 1. then in an extraordinary manner he sets himself to pray, and afflict his soul before the Lord. And we have reason to hope that spiritual *Babylon* (*Rome* I mean) is not long-lived, it is high time therefore that the Saints should fall more earnestly than ever to dig her grave for her by their prayers.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVI.

Reaſons why Extraordinary Prayer is to be ſuper-added to Ordinary.

BUT why is extraordinary prayer to be ſuper-added by the Chriſtian to his ordinary excerciſe of it in his daily courſe? *Queſt.* 4.

Firſt, In obedience to the command of God; He commands not onely we ſhould *pray always*, but *with all prayer* alſo; and extraordinary prayer is one kind among the reſt, and let none of us ſay, is it not enough to pray once or twice every day, but we muſt upon ſome occaſions devote a whole day alſo, to the dammage of calling and family? O what niggards would ſome be towards God, were they left free to devote what time they thought fit for his worſhip? This cavil ſounds too like that of *Judas*, *To what purpoſe is this waſte? for this ointment might have been ſold for much and given to the poor*, *Matth.* 26. *But this he ſaid, not that he loved the poor, but becauſe he was a thief.* Truly ſo, when I hear ſome carnal wretches cry out againſt this waſte of time in praying and faſting; how much might the improvement of that time, if laid out in their callings, have advantaged their families, wives and children? I am ready to think, it is not becauſe they have ſuch a care of their relations as they pretend, for they who grutch a day for prayer, can throw ſome of them many away at the ale-houſe or in idleneſs; but they carry thieviſh hearts in their boſoms, which love to rob God of his due, and care not how little ſervice they put him off with. Is he a loyal ſubject that pays the ordinary Tribute to his Prince, but if occaſion of State requires a Subſidie, this he refuſeth, or doth it grudgingly? Gods commands are none of them, no nor this *Anſw.* 1.

which carries some outward severity on it, so grievous, that any should need to groan or grumble under them. Those yokes (duties and commands I mean) whose out-side seem most hard, have the softest lining within: What seems harder than suffering? and yet when are Saints fuller of heavens joy? What duty more austere than this of fasting and afflicting our souls? and yet in the breast of this Lion, that scares sensual wretches, the Christian finds the sweetest hony-comb of inward comforts. Temple-work is sure to be well paid, if well done; though it be never so little work in his house, God will not have it done *gratis*, none shall kindle a fire on his Altar for nought; and therefore he takes it in great disdain at their hands, who *Mal.* 3. 14. durst say, *What profit is it that we have kept his Ordinance, and walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?* whereas the fault was not in the duty, but in themselves, that they got no more by it: As if a naughty servant should bring himself by his riot and excess to poverty, and then give out a hard master hath undone him.

2. Secondly, To comport with the providence of God, by a suitable return of duty to his actings and dispensations towards us. When God is extraordinary in his Providence, he expects his people should be more than ordinary in seeking of him; what else means that of the *Prophet? Thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel, Amos* 4. 12. Here God alarums them by his extraordinary proceedings intended against them, to take the hint of this warning, and apply themselves speedily to the solemn practice of repentance, and humbling of their souls, as a suitable posture to meet God in, and keep off the storm of his wrath now gathering against them. Is it not high time for a Nation to betake them to their defensive arms, when a mighty Host is marching against them? So *Isa* 26. 20, 21. *Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, &c.* Here he sends his people to their chambers and closets, that they may by afflicting their souls and fervent prayers, find a hiding in the day of his indignation; and why must they do thus? *vers.* 21. *For behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.* The rising of God out of his place imports some notable enterprize he is about to do; and when the Master riseth, it is not manners for the servant to sit still, but to rise also, and prepare to follow

follow him where he goes. God takes special notice how we behave our selves, and comport with his dispensations of judgment or mercy. *Isa.* 22. 12. *In that day the Lord called to Weeping and mourning*; that is, he called them by the voice of his *Providence* as well as his *Prophets*, the nature of which was such, that had not their lusts bungd up their ears, and made them deaf, they could not but hear and understand, that now was the time, if ever, that God expected to see them in sackcloth and tears, humbling their souls before him. Now see how heinously he takes their security and profane slighting of his providence, *vers.* 14. *And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of Hosts, surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord of hosts.* Few sins more provoke God than this, *Psal.* 28. 5. *Because they regard not the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.* So *Dan.* 5. 22. *And thou, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy self, though thou knewest all this*, this lost him his life and Kingdom, as the contrary saved *Ahab*'s for a time, though it was not so sincere as it ought; a temporal humiliation got him a temporal benefit.

Thirdly, For the great influence that this extraordinary duty solemnly performed would have upon our whole life and course of godliness. To keep the body healthful, requires not onely daily food, but now and then physick also; for in the soundest constitution, and that advantaged with the best care and temperance, there will in time such a quantity of superfluous humors gather, that nature without help cannot digest: And truly the temper of the soul is as infirm, and needs as much tending as doth the body. Ordinary prayer is the Saints food, he can as little miss the constant returns of it as his usual meals. But extraordinary is his physick, to clear and discharge the soul of those distempers which it contracts, and cannot conquer by the use of ordinary means; as also to advance and heighten the Christians graces unto a further degree of strength and activity. As God hath in his wise providence ordered one Star of great influence to be at a certain season of the year in conjunction with the Sun, for the more effectual ripening the harvest in these colder parts of the world; so hath he in the same wisdom appointed for the Christians spiritual advantage and help, in this cold climate of the world, that this solemn duty should now and then be taken into 3.

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conjunction with our ordinary exercise of devotion; for want of which it is, that many ripen slower both in their graces and comforts than some of their fellow-Saints, who sit often under the influences of this powerful quickning Ordinance.

CHAP. XLVII.

Directions towards the holy performing this solemn duty of Extraordinary Prayer.

Quest. 5. WHat counsel or direction may be given to the acceptable and successful performance of this solemn duty?

Answ. I come now to shut up my discourse on this point, in answering this last Question; a serious necessary one it is, for indeed it is an edge-tool, of excellent use, but dangerous in his hand that knows not how to use it, like some physick, if it doth not purge it poisons. In the same fat soil, where the corn is best, the weeds also are rankest. Neither grace nor sin grow to such a heighth any where, as in those that converse much with this solemn Ordinance. And therefore, as they who are in a ship upon a swift stream, had need the more look to the steerage of it, because they will be carri'd amain either to their port or wrack; so have they reason to be very careful in the managery of this service, the issue whereof cannot be ordinary, because the duty is extraordinary. Now the counsel or direction to be given must necessarily be divided into these three general heads; something would be directed as preparatory, before this undertaking; something to be observed in the performance, and also after the dispatch of it. The City cannot be safe, unless the whole line be kept, it is all one whether the enemy breaks in at the front, flanck, or rear of an Army; or whether the ship be taken at sea, or sink in the haven when the voyage is over.

1. First, Some preparatory direction before the duty. Now there is a double preparation requisite, the one more remote, the other immediate; or, if you please, habitual preparation and actual.

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There is a remote and habitual preparation, of great use to the performance of this solemn duty, and it lies in this, To look (Christian) that thou shewest a conscionable care in thy daily walking, and the constant exercise of this duty in thy ordinary daily offices of devotion, or else thou art like to make but bad work when thou comest to engage in the extraordinary. 1.

First, thy neglect in the ordinary duty will exceedingly indispose thee for the extraordinary. Who would take a foggy horse out of the pasture to run a race? In extraordinary prayer, the soul is to be put on her full speed, all its powers to be streined to their utmost ability, and to continue long in the work also; Is he fit for so swift and long a race, whose soul is not kept in breath by the daily exercise of ordinary prayer, but lets his graces, if he hath any, be choak'd up with sloth or formality? The more any member is used, the stronger it is; the right-hand, which is our working-hand, hath more activity than the left that is used less. A weakness will certainly invade the powers of thy lazy soul, which though thou perceivest not as thou sittest in thy chair of sloth, will appear when thou risest, and thinkest to go forth in any solemn duty, as thou wert wont to do; then thou wilt find with *Sampson*, that thou hast lost thy strength in the lap of sloth and negligence. As fasting is too strong for new bottles, so it is too sweet wine for to be put into fusty and mouldy ones; now the only way to keep a bottle or cask sweet, is not to let it stand long empty without any liquor in it. 1.

Secondly, As it will indispose thee for this solemn duty, so it is a bad symptom concerning thy spiritual state it self, which is worse than the former. Grace works uniformly, and discovers a comely proportion in its actings. Haply you may see the son of a Prince on some high day, in richer and more glorious apparel than on another day that is ordinary; but you shall never find him in sordid, ragged, and beggarly cloathes, still he will be clad as becomes a Kings son. Possibly, yea, 'tis likely, that you may see the Christian come forth in an extraordinary day and duty, with more enlargement of affections in prayer, and all his graces raised to a higher glory in their actings than ordinary; but you shall never find him with his roab of grace laid aside, still the true Saint will declare his high birth by his every day course, he will not live in the neglect of ordinary duties, and cast off communion with 2.

with God in his daily walking. O 'tis the brand of an hypocrite to have his devotion come by fits, and like a drift snow, to lie thick in one place and none in another; to seem for zeal like Angels at a time, and live like Atheists many weeks after. Surely grace acts more evenly, and is never so unlike it self. It is ill living in that Misers house, who hath never any good meat on his table but when he makes a feast, and that is very seldom; or with him that upon an occasion hath a day of prayer, but starves himself and family, or pinches them in their daily fare. Well, never think of medling with this extraordinary duty, till thou inurest thy self to the ordinary exercise of prayer, and takest more care in thy daily walking with God.

2. Secondly, There is a more close and immediate preparation required, and this I called actual preparation. 'tis true indeed, he that is conscientious and careful in the ordinary exercises of Religion, hath a great advantage of him that either neglects them, or is loose in them, for his heart must needs stand in a nearer disposition to this extraordinary service than the other: As he that is up and hath his clothes on, is more ready to go on his Masters errand, than he that is asleep in his bed. Yet besides this care in our daily walking, there needs some further pains to be taken with his heart, to raise it unto such a frame, as may comport with this solemn service. The neat housewife, though she endeavours always to keep her house clean, yet against some good time (as they call it) she is more than ordinary curious in washing her rooms, and scouring her vessels, that they may not only be clean, but bright; and so should the Christian. Now is the time for thee to scoure off the dust thou contractest in thy daily course, and to brighten thy graces unto a further glory than appears in thy every-day walking, to do which, will cost pains, and require time. The Christian is like some heavy Birds, as the *Bustard* and others, that cannot get upon the wing without a run of a furlong or two, or a great Bell that takes some time to the raising of it. Now Meditation is the great instrument thou art to use in this preparatory work, allow thy self some considerable portion of time before the day of extraordinary prayer for thy retirement, wherein thou maist converse most privately with thy own heart; this cannot be done in a crowd, neither must it be left to the time of engaging in the extraordinary duty, we cannot do both duties to-

together; the Husbandman cannot whet his ſythe and cut the graſs at once. Betake thy ſelf therefore to thy cloſet, and in the firſt place call thy thoughts off the world, and as much as is poſſible, clear thy ſoul of all that is forein to the work thou art about; this is as the wiping of the Table-book before we can write any thing well on it. Now the more effectually to gather in thy heart to a holy ſeriouſneſs, and compact thy thoughts together, it were expedient for thee at firſt to lay before thee the grand importance of the approaching ſervice: Thou art going to ſtand before the great God, and that very near, in an extraordinary duty, wherein thou wilt either ſanctifie or profane his Reverend Name in a high degree, and accordingly art to expect his love or wrath in ſome choice bleſſing or dreadfull curſe, to be the iſſue and reſult of thy undertaking; gird the loins of thy mind with ſome ſuch awful apprehenſions as theſe. As natural fear makes the ſpirits retire from the outward parts of the body to the heart, ſo this holy fear of miſcarrying in ſo ſolemn a duty, would be a means to call thy thoughts from all exterior carnal objects, and fix them upon the duty in hand. *Pſal.* 5. 7. *In thy fear will I worſhip.* Such will the print on the Wax be, as the Sculpture is on the Seal; if the fear of God be deeply engraven on thy heart, there is no doubt but it will make a ſuitable impreſſion on the duty thou performeſt. Well, now the Court is ſet, and ſilence commanded, a few particulars I ſhall propound for thy thoughts to go upon in this preparatory work.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Examination of our hearts about the end we propound in this undertaking, very neceſſary.

1. FIrſt, Examine thy ſoul, what end thou propoundeſt to thy ſelf in the intended ſervice of extraordinary prayer; none but a child or a fool will run before he knows what is his errand. The end is that which a wiſe man looks to before he ſets his hand to any work; and the more weighty the enterprize is, the more neceſſary this is. *Firſt*, Conſider, if the end thou propoundeſt be evil, the duty cannot be good, becauſe thy heart is not ſincere in it. The ſincerity of the heart diſcovers it ſelf in the mark it ſets up, and end it aims at in a duty, not in the external performance of it. The thief and the honeſt traveller may be found riding in the ſame road, but they have different aims therein, and this diſtinguiſheth them. Thus the Saint and hypocrite joyn in the ſame duty, ſhoot as it were in the ſame Bowe, but their eye takes not the ſame aim, and therefore their Arrows meet not in the ſame Butt. The prayers of the one are rejected as abominable, and the other graciouſly accepted. Who more ſeemingly devout than the *captive Jews*, that kept up a Faſt for ſeventy years together? yet God gives them but little thanks for their pains, becauſe their end was not right, *Zech.* 7. 5. *When ye faſted and mourned in the fifth and ſeventh month, even thoſe ſeventy years, did ye at all faſt unto me, even unto me?* The faſter a man gallops if he be out of his way, it is the worſe. Zeal is the beſt or worſt thing in a duty; if the end be right, O 'tis excellent! but if wrong, ſtark naught; and it is no eaſie thing to propound a right end. The eye muſt be ſet right in the head, before it can look right. If the piece be wrong made, it will never carry the bullet ſtreight to the mark. A falſe heart

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(and every carnal heart is such) cannot have a true end. *Secondly*, consider, That your endeavour in the duty will bear proportion, and be commensurate to the end you propound therein; if your end be low, your endeavour will be no more than to reach that end; as he that intends to build a little cottage, contents himself with ordinary stuff, clay and thatch; but he that designes some stately palace, provides more precious materials: Thus *David* was very curious in the materials he laid aside for the Temple, *For the Palace* (saith he) *is not for man, but the Lord God; therefore he prepared with all his might gold and silver, &c.* 1 *Chron.* 29. 1, 2, 3. The hypocrites ends in a fast are low and base, his credit with men, carnal profit and the like; accordingly his endeavour is laid out on the external part of the duty, a demure countenance, devout posture, and such expressions in prayer as may most take with those that hear him, and this is all he looks at; but the gracious soul saith with *David*, This palace I build, this duty I perform, is not for man, but for the Lord God, and therefore his chief care is to provide more precious materials, a broken heart for sin in his confessions, faith and fervency in his petitions, love and thankfulness in his acknowledgments of mercies received.

Quest. But when is an evil end propounded in this duty?

Answ. The end we propound may be evil, either intrinsecally, when the thing we aim at is evil in its own nature, or else from some irregularity in placing it too high or low in our aim.

1. First, The ends that are intrinsecally evil, to name two, *first*, When a person or a people shall fast and pray, to cover and more slightly carry on any wicked enterprize; This is a horrid evil, a monstrous abomination: What is this but to hang out the sign of an Angel at the dore, that they may play the devil within the less suspected? yet such deep hypocrisie hath the heart of man discovered, that it dare come and lay its Cocatrice egg under the very wing of God, and make use of this his solemn Ordinance, as an expedient to hatch their wicked designs. The Fox, they say, when hard put to it, will to save himself, fall in among the dogs, and hunt among them as one of the company. Thus the hypocrite, the better to conceal his wicked projects, will run among the Saints, and make as loud a cry in this duty and others, as the best of them all. It is the devils old trick, and he hath learnt it his in-

ſtruments, to wrap up wicked plots in the gilded covers of Gods Ordinances. What plotting and counterplotting was there between *Sechem* the ſon of *Hamor*, and *Simeon* and *Levi*? and the expedient which both uſed to accompliſh their deſignes was an Ordinance of God, the one hopes by ſubmitting to it, to hook into his hands the whole eſtate of *Jacob's* family, *Shall not their ſubſtance be ours?* and the other perſwades them to it, that when they were ſore they might butcher them without reſiſtance. *Abſalom*, that he may the better play the Traitor againſt his father, begs leave to pay his vow at *Hebron*. *Jezabel* ſets her trap for *Naboth*, and that he may the more ſurely fall into her clutches, ſhe croutcheth and humbleth her ſelf even before God in a faſt. And the demure *Phariſee*, who bragg'd ſo much of his faſting, our Saviour was bold to tell them, it was to devour the widows houſes; but as the Father hath it, *Manducant in terris quod apud inferos digerunt*, They devour on earth thoſe morſels, that will lie heavy on their ſtomacks in hell to be digeſting to eternity. Thus the hypocrite, like *Antichriſt*, ſits in the Temple of God, and there commits his execrable abominations, turning a houſe of prayer into a den of thieves. O tremble at this great wickedneſs! It gives a crimſon tincture to a ſin, when it is committed under the diſguiſe of Religion. *Secondly*, when a perſon thinks by faſting and prayer to ſatisfie God for his ſin, or merit any favour at the hands of God; this is wicked and abominable, and as contrary to the nature of prayer as buying is to begging. *The poor* (ſaith *Solomon*) *uſeth entreaties*, *Prov.* 18. 23. we do not uſe to pay and pray too. When *Job* reſolves on prayer, he renounceth any plea taken from his own righteouſneſs, *Whom though I were righteous, yet would I not anſwer, but I would make ſupplication to my judge*, *Job* 9. 15. We cannot have the benefit of the throne of grace, till we quit our legal plea. Chriſt indeed pleads as righteous, and therefore deſires what he asks for us as juſt, becauſe he hath paid for it; but we pray as ſinners, and therefore crave all as mercy; yea, though we plead Chriſts merit, becauſe he is the greateſt and freeſt gift of all other. Yet ſuch is the pride of mans heart, that he had rather play the Merchant, and truck his duties for Gods bleſſings, than be thought to receive them *gratis*. This was the temper of the carnal *Jews*, they thought to pacifie God for their ſin, as *Jacob* his angry brother,

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with the droves and flocks of duties, which they presented him with, and thought their services undervalued when they were not accepted for good payment; hence their bold expostulating the case with the Lord, *Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge? Isa.* 58. 3. such a high opinion they had of themselves. O take heed of this, pride turns an Ordinance into an Idol. God accepts our fasts and prayers, when used for humiliation, but abhors them when we bring them for our justification. The *Pharisee* himself by his proud brags, how oft he fasted, while the poor *Publican* got the prize by a humble confession of his sin, *Luk.* 18. He that thinks to wash his face with puddle water, instead of making it clean will leave it foule; truly our best tears are not over-clean, and can they make us clean that need themselves to be washed? Holy *Job* durst not rely on his purity, *If I wash my self with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and my own cloathes shall abhor me. For he is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment, Job* 9. 30, 31, 32.

Secondly, The end may be, though not intrinsecally evil, yet evil from some irregularity in misplacing it; as when we make that our ultimate end, which should onely be our subordinate end in the duty. That which would be lawful standing in its proper place, becomes sinful when the ultimate end is crowded down to make room for that. The glory of God is to be the ultimate end, not onely in every duty of worship, but in all our common actions also, even to eating and drinking, those low actions are to be elevated to this high end, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. and good reason he should be our utmost end, from whom we received our beginning; *all things are of him*, and therefore fit they should be *to him*; the River-water empties it self into the bosom of the Sea, from whence it flows. Now if we are to have so high an end in our lowest actions, then surely in our highest, and such are acts of worship, in which we have immediately to do with God, and are thence called *Priests, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ* 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. There is indeed another end also for which Ordinances are appointed, *viz.* to be conduit-pipes for conveighing all kind of blessings from God unto us; but this is an inferior end, and to be subordi-

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nated to the former, or elſe we make the glory of God an underling to our particular good, which God will not endure. Poſſibly we are in ſome great affliction, this ſets us to prayer for deliverance, thus far we keep our way; but then we turn aſide, when our deliverance is more regarded by us then his glory, this is to ſet the Subject in his Princes chair, *Uti Deo, ut fruamur mundo*, to make uſe of God, that we may enjoy the creature. Beware of this. What ever we prefer in our deſires above the glory of God, is an idol-worſhip by us. The heart can engrave as well as the hand, and an idol in the heart is as bad as one ſet up in the houſe.

Queſt. But how may I find whether the glory of God, or the particular good thing I pray for, be that which make my chief end in duty?

Anſw. It may be diſcovered two ways; *Firſt*, By thy carriage in prayer. *Secondly*, after prayer.

1. Firſt, By the carriage of thy heart in duty; if the glory of God be chiefly aimed at by thee, this will give a tincture to the whole duty, and be influential into every part of it; thou wilt ſuit thy requeſts to this end. For as there is a ſecret force from the arm (that draws the bowe) impreſſed on the arrow, which carries it to the mark aimed at by the ſhooter; ſo there is a ſecret power which carries the ſoul out in duty, to act ſuitably to the end he chiefly propounds, and deſires to obtain; for no man would willingly obſtruct and hinder what above all he wiſheth for. We will ſuppoſe, pardon of ſin is the mercy thou prayeſt for; now if thou deſireſt ſincerely the glory of God as well as this mercy, yea, above it, this will direct thee in thy confeſſion of ſin, to afflict thy ſoul more for the diſhonor thou haſt by it reflected on God, then the wrath thou haſt incurred thy ſelf. So in thy petition, thou dareſt not beg thy pardon on terms that were diſhonorable for God to give it on, but will deſire the mercy in ſuch a way, as his glory may be both ſecured and advanced. Now God cannot pardon the ſin of an impenitent wretch, that holds ſtill the love and liking of his luſt, without infinite wrong to his glorious Name. And therefore if his glory be ſo high in thy eye as thou ſayeſt, thou wilt cry as earneſtly for his ſanctifying grace, as for pardoning mercy, and not meerly becauſe thou canſt not have pardon without it (as a ſick man deſires a bitter potion to ſave his life,

life, not that he loves it) but becauſe by it thou ſhalt be fitted to glorifie him.

Secondly, It may be diſcovered by thy carriage after duty, and that in two particulars: *Firſt*, when the mercy prayed for is obtain'd. If thou didſt chiefly aim at the glory of God in begging it, thy chief care will be to lay it out for his glory now thou haſt it; whereas he that aimed at himſelf in praying for it, will as little regard God in the uſing of it, as he did in begging it. It is natural for things to reſolve into their principles. The child that *Hanna* obtained of God, ſhe dedicates unto the Lord, and why? but becauſe this was her end in praying for him; 1 *Sam.* 1. 11. compared with 28. When *David's* prayer is heard, and he delivered, mark what his reſolve from this is, *I will walk before God in the land of the living*, *Pſal.* 116. 9. and again, *O Lord*, *truly I am thy ſervant*, *thou haſt looſed my bonds*, *verſ.* 16. He returns the mercy to God, by improving it for him in a holy life: How can we think he aimed at the glory of God in praying for health, that runs away from God as ſoon as he is ſet upon his leggs? or in praying for wealth, that lays it out upon his luſts? *Secondly*, When the thing prayed for is denyed. He that aims ſincerely at Gods glory in prayer for a mercy (I ſpeak now of ſuch mercies as are but conditionally promiſed) he will chearfully ſubmit to the will of God in a denial thereof, becauſe God can in ſuch petitions glorifie himſelf, by denying as well as granting them. *David* prayed and faſted for the life of his ſick child, it dies notwithſtanding; now does this denial make him fall out with God? is he clamorous and diſcontent? No, it raiſeth no ſtorm in his heart, or lowring weather in his countenance to hinder him in the ſervice of God; he waſheth his tears from his blubber'd cheeks, changes his apparel, and goes cheerfully into the houſe of God and worſhippeth, 2 *Sam.* 12. 20. ſo powerfully did the will of God determine his will. Thus as the heavenly bodies are by the *primum mobile* carried contrary to their particular inclination, ſo grace in a Saint over-rules his natural affection, and carries him into a compliance with the will of God when it croſſeth his own. Our bleſſed Saviour had natural affections, which made him pray the bitter cup of his paſſion might, if poſſible, paſs from him; yet not ſo, but he was willing to take a denial, and therefore deſires his Father to glorifie himſelf, though it were by taking away his life, *Joh.* 12. 27, 28. 2.

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2. The second thing thou art to do, having fix'd thy end right, is to make a privie search into thy heart and life, whereby thou maist be enabled more fully and feelingly to lay open thy condition before the Lord. Now there are three heads of enquirie thou art to go upon: *First*, For the sins thou hast committed. *Secondly*, For the mercies thou hast received. *Thirdly*, For the wants thou liest under.

1. First, For the sins thou hast committed. The great businesse of a fast lies in the practice of repentance, and this cannot be done without a narrow scrutinie of the heart: *Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord, Lam.* 3.40. The Thief must be found before he can be tried, and tried before he is condemned and executed. Some sins no doubt may be taken and apprehended with little pains, but if thou beest true to God and thy own soul, thou wouldst not willingly let any of the companie escape. How canst thou expect pardon for any, that desirest not justice on all? and how canst thou say, thou desirest justice on those sins, which thou endeavourest not to apprehend? That Constable that having a hue and cry brought him for a pack of Thieves, and lets any get away rather than he will rise to search for them, shews his zeal to justice is little. I do not say, thou wilt be able to find all, it is enough if by thy diligence thou giveſt proof of thy sincerity, that thou wouldst not conceal any. Set thy self therefore in good earnest to the work; beset thy heart and life round, as men would do a wood where murderers are lodg'd; hunt back to the several stages of thy life, youth, and riper years, all the capacities and relations thou hast stood in; thy calling general and particular, every place where thou hast lived, and thy behaviour in them. Bid memory bring in its old records, and read over what passages are there written; call conscience in to depose what it knows concerning thee, and encourage it to speak freelie without mincing the matter. And take heed thou dost not snib this witness, as some corrupt Judges use, when they would favour a bad cause, or give it secret instructions, as *David* did *Joab*, to deal gently with thee. Be willing to have thy condition opened fully, and all thy coverings turn'd up; for many times foul designes are hid with fair pretences. As the Barrels of powder in the *Parliament cellar* under coals and billets. Now when thou hast gone as far as thou canst, begging Heavens help in the thing to search and try thee, whether

whether there be any further wickedneſs that thou haſt not found out, then burden thy ſoul, judge thy ſelf for them with all the brokenneſs of heart thou canſt get, juſtifying God in the ſentence denounced againſt thee for them. God will have thee lay thy neck on the block, though he means not to give the ſtroak. In a word, Labour in thy meditations to give every ſin its due accent, and ſuffer thy thoughts to dwell on them, till thou findeſt the fire of thy indignation kindle in thy heart againſt them, yea, flame forth into ſuch a holy zeal againſt them, as makes thee put thy ſelf under an oath to endeavour their utter ruine and deſtruction. Then thou art fit to beg thy own life, when thou haſt vowed the death of thy ſins.

2. Mercy received. Thou haſt theſe (at leaſt the moſt ſignal inſtances of them) upon the file, unleſs thou beeſt a very bad husband for thy ſoul. If God thinks fit to bottle his Saints tears, they ſurely ſhould not forget to book his mercies. Now there are ſome ſpecial ſeaſons, wherein the Saint ſhould take down this Chronicle of Gods mercies, to read in it; and this is one, when he is to engage in this extraordinary duty, *Firſt*, as the moſt effectual means to melt his heart for ſin. Mercy gives the greateſt aggravation to ſin, and therefore muſt needs be the moſt powerful inſtrument to break the heart for ſin: With this God doth reproach ſinning *Iſrael*, *Do you thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh people and unwiſe*, *Deut.* 32. 6. they could not have been evil to ſuch a heighth, if God had not been ſo good to them. When God would break the ſoar of his peoples ſin, he compounds a poultis with his choiceſt mercies, and lays this warm to their hearts. *David* had ſate many months under the Lectures of the Law, unhumbled for his bloody complicated ſin; but *Nathan* is ſent to preach a rehearſal Sermon to him of the many mercies that God had graced him with, and while theſe coals are pouring on his head, his heart diſſolves preſentlie, 2 *Sam.* 12. The froſt ſeldom is quite out of the earth, till the Sun hath got ſome power in the ſpring to diſſolve its bands; but then it ſets it going: Neither will the hardneſs of the heart be to any purpoſe removed until the ſoul be throughly warmed with the ſenſe of Gods mercies. *Ezek.* 20. 43. *There ſhall ye remember your ways, and all your doings wherein you have been defiled, and ye ſhall loath your ſelves in your own ſight.* Where is that there? but when amidſt the 2.

thoughts of his mercies, as by the context is manifeſt. A pardon from the Prince hath made ſome weep, whom the ſight of the block and ax could not move. Sight of wrath inflames the conſcience, but ſenſe of mercy kindly melts the heart, and overcomes the will. *Secondly*, as a neceſſary ingredient in all our prayers, *Let your requeſts be made known with thankſgiving*, *Phil.* 4. This ſpice muſt be in all our offerings. He that prays for mercy he wants, and is not thankful for mercies received, he may ſeem mindful of himſelf, but he is forgetful of God, and ſo takes the right courſe to ſhut his prayers out of doors. God will not put his mercies into a rent purſe, and ſuch is an unthankful heart, for it drops them ſoon out of his memory.

3. Thy wants. Before the Tradeſman goes to the fair, he looks over his ſhop, that he may know what commodity he moſt lacks. Thou goeſt to this dutie to furniſh thy ſelf with the graces and mercies thou needeſt, is it not neceſſary then to ſee what thy preſent ſtore is? what thy perſonal and what thy relational needs are? not forgetting the publick, in whoſe peace & happineſs thou art ſo much concerned, for if this Ship ſink, thou canſt not be ſafe in thy private Cabin. To leave all theſe to occur & overtake thee, without charging thy thoughts with them by previous meditation, is too high a preſumption for a ſober Chriſtian to take up. Beſides, thy affections need help as well as thy memory; nay, we may ſooner bring our ſins and wants to mind, than lay them to heart; it is eaſier to know them, than knowing them to be deeply affected with them: and we do not come in prayer to tell God a bare ſtory of theſe things, but feelingly and affectionately to make our moan and complaint, with deep ſighs and groans to him, that can pardon the one, and relieve us in the other.

3. Thirdly, When thou haſt upon this ſcrutinie kindled thy affections, with the bellows of meditation, into a deep ſenſe of theſe things, then furniſh thy ſelf with Arguments from the Promiſes to enforce thy prayers, and make them prevalent with God. The promiſes are the ground of faith, and faith when ſtrengthened will make thee fervent, and ſuch fervency ever ſpeeds, and returns with victorie out of the field of prayer: *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*, *Jam.* 5. Words in prayer are but as powder, the promiſe is the bullet that doth the execution, faith the grace that chargeth the ſoul with it, and fervencie

vencie that gives fire and diſchargeth it into Gods boſom with ſuch a force, that the Almighty cannot deny it entrance, becauſe indeed he will not. Now as he is an imprudent Souldier that leaves his bullets to be caſt, or fitted to the bore of his piece, till he comes into the field; ſo he an unwiſe Chriſtian that doth not provide and ſort promiſes ſuitable to his condition and requeſt, before he engageth in ſo ſolemn a ſervice. *Daniel* firſt ſearcheth out the promiſe, what God had engaged himſelf to do for his people, as alſo when the date of this promiſe expired; and when by meditation and ſtudy upon it he had raiſed his heart to a firm belief thereof, then he ſets upon God with a holy violence in prayer, and preſſeth him cloſe, not onely as a merciful God, but righteous alſo, to remember them now the bond of his promiſe was coming out, *O Lord, according to all thy righteouſneſs, I beſeech thee let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy City Jeruſalem, &c. Dan.* 9. 16. The mightier any is in the Word, the more mighty he will be in prayer.

CHAP. XLIX.

Directions to be obſerved in, and after the Duty.

HAving diſpatcht the preparatory directions, now I come to thoſe that are to be obſerved in the duty it ſelf, and becauſe thoſe will ſerve for this purpoſe which are given in another place for the dutie of praier in general, I ſhall name but a few, and thoſe briefly. *Direct.* 21.

SECT. I.

WHen the time to engage thy ſelf in this extraordinary duty is come, beware thou ſetteſt not upon it in the confidence of thy preparation, whatever thy care or ſucceſs therein hath 1.

been. What a worthie *Doctor* directed Miniſters, as to their preaching, is applicable to Chriſtians as to their praying; He bad them ſtudy for their Sermons as if they expected no divine aſſiſtance in the Pulpit; and when they came into the Pulpit, to caſt themſelves upon divine aſſiſtance as if they had not ſtudied at all. Thus prepare before thou comeſt to faſt and pray, as if thou wert to meet no further aſſiſtance in the duty; but when thou comeſt to the performance of the duty, caſt thy ſelf wholly upon divine aſſiſtance, as if thou hadſt not at all prepared. I know not which of the two doth worſt, he that preſumes upon Gods aſſiſtance in this great work without preparation, or he that preſumes on his preparation, and relies not after he hath done his beſt endeavour on the gracious aſſiſtance of God. The firſt ſhews he hath but mean thoughts of this ſolemn Ordinance, yea, low and unworthy thoughts of the great God, with whom he hath to do in it; and the other too high thoughts of himſelf. What though now, Chriſtian, thou marcheſt in goodly array, and thy heart in order, how ſoon alas may all thy preparation be routed, and thy chariot-wheels, which thou haſt taken ſo much pains to oyl, be ſet faſt, or knock'd off? Now thy thoughts are united, thou thinkeſt, doſt thou know where they will be a few minutes hence, if thy God help thee not to keep them together? Thou canſt as eaſily hold the four winds in a bag, as keep the thoughts of thy fluid mind from gadding. Now thy affections are wound up to ſome height, but canſt thou hold the peggs from ſlipping? Cannot God wither thy hand while thou ſtretcheſt it out in prayer, make thy tongue faulter when thou wouldſt make uſe of it, yea, ſuffer a ſuddain damp to fall upon thy ſpirit that ſhall chill all thy affections, and leave thy heart as cold as a ſtone in thy boſom? *Surely man at his beſt eſtate is vanity.* And this in regard of the temper of his ſpirit, as well as in the conſtitution of his body, and other his worldly advantages. How oft do we ſee the gifts of his mind, and the vivacity of his graces, fade and wither in one duty? which at another, when the Spirit of God vouchſafed his gentle breath to quicken them, did flouriſh, and ſend forth their fragrant ſpices in abundance? O do not then applaud thy ſelf in thy gourd, which may ſo ſoon be ſmitten, neither commit ſo great an adventure as the ſucceſſe of this duty is in the leaking bottom of thy own preparation.

Secondly,

Secondly, Pray often rather then very long at a time. It is hard to be very long in prayer, and not slacken in our affections. Those watches which are made to go longer than ordinary at one winding, do commonly lose towards the end. The flesh is weak, and if the spirits of the body tire, the soul that rideth on this beast must needs be cast behind. Our Saviour when he prayed for his life, we find him praying rather often than long at once. He who in a long journey lights often to let his beast take breath, and then mounts upon him again, will get to his journeys end may be sooner, than he that puts him beyond his strength. Especially observe this in social prayers, for when we pray in company, we must consider them that travail with us in the duty; as *Jacob* said, *I will lead on softly as the children are able to endure.* Yet I speak not this that you should give any check to the Spirit of God in his assistances, which some time come so strong, that the Christian is, as it were, carried with a full fore-wind, and hath the labour of tugging at the Oar saved him, the ship of the soul goes with most facility when with most speed; such assistances lift both the person praying, and those that joyn with him (if gracious, and under the same quicknings) in a manner above all weariness. The Spirit brings spirits (affections I mean) with him. Such a soul is like a vessel that runs full and fresh, what pours from him is quick and spiritful; whereas at another time, when the Spirit of God denies these assistances, his prayer tastes flat to his own palat, if not to others. 2.

Thirdly, Be very careful to approve thy self faithful in the soul-humbling work of the day; let thy confessions be free and full, the sense thou hast of thy sins be deep, and thy sorrow for them sincere and Evangelical; for as thou quitteſt thy self in this, so thou wilt be in all the other parts of the duty: If thou confessest sin feelingly, thou wilt pray against it fervently; if thy sorrow be deep, and reach to thy very heart and spirit, then thy petitions for pardoning mercy, and purging grace, will also come from the heart, be cordial, warm, and vehement: Whereas he that melts not in confession of sin, will freez in his prayers that he puts up against it, if his tears be false and whorish, *lachrymæ mentiri doctæ*, his desires cannot be true Why do men ask in their petitions that grace which they do not in their hearts desire, but because they do not feel the smart, and are not loathed with the evil: 3.

evil of their sins that they confess. Thus many confess their sins, as beggars sometimes shew their soars, which they are not willing to have cured. Again, as thou art in thy confession of sin, so thou wilt be in thy acknowledgments of mercy; the lower thou fallest in the abasement of thy self for thy sins, the higher thou wilt mount in thy praises for his mercies. The rebound of the ball is suitable to the force with which it is thrown down. The deeper the base is in confession, the shriller will the treble of thy praises be, for these mutually aggravate one another. The greater our mercies are, the greater are our sins, and the greater our sins, the greater are the mercies, which notwithstanding them our good God vouchsafeth us. So that the sense we have of one must needs be in proportion to the other; as we are afflicted for sin, so will we be affected with mercy.

Fourthly, Improve the intervals of prayer with seasonable and suitable meditations, that thou maist be fitted to return to the work with more life and vigour. Meditation is Prayers Handmaid, to wait on it both before and after the performance. It is as the plough before the sower, to prepare the heart for the duty of prayer, and the harrow to cover the seed when 'tis sown. As the hopper feeds the mill with grist, so doth meditation the heart with matter for prayer. Now if it be necessary that thou shouldst consider before duty what thou art to pray, then surely after duty to make reflection on thy self how thou didst pray. The mill may go, and yet no corn be ground. Thus thou maist possibly confess many sins, and yet thy heart be broken and ground with sorrow for none of them all; thou maist pray for many graces, and exercise little or no grace in thy praying for them (thy heart being lazy, and putting no weight to the work) without which these spices are not broken, and so send not forth their sweet savour. Look therefore back upon the past duty, and observe narrowlie what the behaviour of thy heart was in it; if thou findest it to have been lazie, and drew loose in its gears, or plaid the truant by gadding from the work with impertinent thoughts; in a word, if under the power of any sinful distemper, be sure at thy return to the duty of prayer, that thou chargest this home upon thy self with shame and sorrow. This is the only way to stay Gods hand, and stop him from commencing a suit against thee: *If we judge our selves we shall not be judged*, 1 Cor. 11. 31. *Ubi desinit justitia,*

juſtitia, incipit judicium, If we do not juſtice on our ſelves, then God will right himſelf as well as he can. Indeed thou canſt not in faith pray for pardon of theſe ſins, till thou haſt ſhewn thy ſelf on Gods ſide, by entring thy proteſt againſt them. *Moſes* took the right method, he expreſt his zeal firſt for God againſt *Iſraels* ſin of the *golden Calf*, and then fell hard to the work of prayer to God for the pardon of it; He durſt not open his lips for them to God, till he had vented his zeal for God, *Exod.* 32. 26. compared with 30, 31 *verſes*. And if he took this courſe when to intercede for others, much more then ſhouldſt thou when to pray for the pardon of thy own ſin.

Again, If upon this review of thy prayer, thou findeſt thy heart was warm in the work, that thy affections flowed out to God, and his reciprocated love again by unboſoming himſelf to thee, take heed that no ſecret pride robs thee of thy new-got treaſure; be humble and thankful, remembring they were not thy own wings on which thou wert carried. And alſo be careful to improve theſe divine favours, given to encourage thee in the work, as the handfuls of ears of corn let fall for *Ruth* in the field of *Boaz*; God would not that they ſhould ſtop thy mouth, but open it wider when thou comeſt again to pray. Did thy heart begin to melt in thy boſom? O now cry for more brokenneſs of heart. Did thy God caſt a kind look on thee? let it ſet thee a longing for fuller diſcoveries of his love. When the beggar ſees the rich man putting his hand to his purſe, he cries more earneſtly. God is now on the giving hand, and this ſhould embolden thee to ask; as *Abraham*, who as God yielded, made his approaches cloſer, improving the ground which he got by inches for a further advantage to gain more, *Gen.* 18. 27.

Sect. II.

THe third word of Direction is to the Chriſtian, how he ſhould carrie himſelf when the day for extraordinary prayer is over, and this lies in a holie watch that he is to ſet upon himſelf. He that pr ies and watcheth not, is like him that ſows a field with precious ſeed, but leaves the gate open for hogs to come and

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root

root it up; or him that takes great pains to get mony, but no care to lay it up safely when he hath it. If Satan cannot beat thee in the field, yet he hopes to have thee at an advantage when thou hast disbanded thy forces, the duty be past, and thou liest in a careless posture. *Esau* promised himself an opportunity of avenging himself on *Jacob*, *The days of mourning* (saith he) *for my father are at hand, then will I slay him*, *Gen.* 27. Thus saith Satan, The days of mourning and fasting will soon be over, he will not be alwaies upon his knees praying, not alwaies beating down his body with fasting, and then I will fall upon him. Now one of these two waies thy danger is like to come upon thee, either by his wounding thy faith, or slackening thy care in thy obediential walking; and if he can do either, he will give a sad blow to thy praiers.

1. Look therefore after such a day to thy faith; to pray and not to act faith, is to shoot and not look where the arrow lights; to send a ship with Merchandise to sea, and look for no return by the voyage. Thou hast in prayer laboured to overcome God to hear and help thee; now take as much pains to overcome thy heart into a quiet waiting on God, and entire confidence in him. When *Jehoshaphat* had ended his publick fast, he stands up the next day and speaks these words to his people, that had joyned with him in that solemn dutie, *Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper*, 2 *Chron.* 20. 20. So when our blessed Saviour had taught his Disciples to pray, then he presseth them entirely to commit themselves and their affairs to that God to whom they praied, *Matth.* 6. Truly else extraordinarie praier is but extraordinarie prattle; we mock God, and our prayers will mock us, for no fruit will come of them. The Hunter may want his supper, though his dog runs fast and mouthes it well, if when he comes at the prey he dares not fasten upon it. Now it is faiths office to fasten on the promise, and take hold of God, without which thy loud cry in praier is bootless and fruitless. O canst thou trust thy cause with the Lawyer, after thy opening it to him? and put thy life into the Physicians hand, by following his prescriptions, when thou hast acquainted him with thy disease? and darest not thou venture thy stake in Gods hand, after thou hast poured thy soul forth to him in

in praier? This is a great folly; Why should'st thou think Omnipotency cannot help, or truth and faithfulness will not? yea, a grievous sin to bring the Name of the great God into question by thy unbelief. Yet this our Saviour complains sadly to be the usage that God meets with at their hands from whom he might expect better. *Shall not God avenge his Elect which cry day and night to him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.* What greater securitie can the heart of a Saint desire, more than the word of a faithful God? yet few to be found after all their praying for deliverance that can entirely wait for the same. *Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? Luk.* 18.

Secondly, Thy obediential walking. *Solomons* advice is, to *keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, Eccles.* 5. 1. Mine at present is, to look to thy foot as thou comest from it. Thou maist soon do thy self more mischief, than all the devils in hell can do thee. They cannot intercept thy prayers, and hinder the happie return of them into thy bosome; but thou mist soon do it. *Behold, the Lords hand is not shortned that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear, but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear, Isa.* 59. 1. This is the whisperer that separateth chief friends, that makes God our best friend stand aloof from his people and their prayers. Be as careful, Christian, after a fast, as a man would be after strong physick; a cold catch'd now, a little disorder in thy walking may be of sad consequence. Remember that as thou hast left thy praiers, so thy vows with the Lord; as thou lookest God should answer the one, so he expects thou shouldst pay the other. Break thy promise to him, and thou dischargest God with thy own hand of any mercie he owes thee; it is folly to think thou canst bind God, and leave thy self free. 2.

CHAP. L.

Of the Precatory part of Prayer, with a four-fold similitude to be observed in praying for spiritual and temporal mercies.

HAving dispatcht the first branch in the distinction of the kinds of prayer, which held forth the *diversos modos orandi*, from which hath been shewn, That we are to pray with all manner of prayer, *Ejaculatory* and *Composed*, *Solitary* and *Social*, *Private* and *Publick*, *Ordinary* and *Extraordinary*. We now take up the second branch, and are to consider *diversam materiam orationis*, the diverse matter of prayer. And thus, *To pray with all prayer and Supplication*, is to encircle the whole matter of prayer within the compass of our duties, and not to leave any thing out of our praiers which God would have taken in. Now this diversitie of praiers matter, some think they may find in the two words of the Text, προσευχὴ and δέησις, but I shall not ground my discourse on so nice a criticism. We will content our selves with the division, which the same *Apostle* makes, *Phil.* 4. 6. *In every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God*, and 1 *Thess* 5. 17, 18. *Pray without ceasing*; *In every thing give thanks*. In both which places the whole matter of prayer is comprehended in these two, Request and Thanksgiving. These two are like the double motion of the lungs, by which they suck in and breath out the air again. In the Petitionarie part of prayer, we desire something at Gods hands; in Thanksgiving, we return praise to him for mercies received from him. I begin with the Petitionarie part of prayer, and it is threefold, Precative, Deprecative, Imprecative; as for that of Intercession, we shall leave it to another place, under those words, *Supplication for all Saints*.

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First, *Precatory*, that part of prayer, I mean, wherein the Christian desires of God in the Name of Christ, some good thing of the Promise to be given unto him. Now the good things promised are either Spiritual or Temporal; those that respect our souls, and our eternal salvation, or those which relate to our bodies and temporary estate of them in this life. Such a large field hath the Christian given him for his requests to walk in, for *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. This earth below, to a Saint is a Land of Promise, though not the Land which is chiefly promised. God hath not promised him heaven, but left him to the wide world to shift for his outward subsistence; he hath not bid them live by faith for their souls, but live by their wits for their bodies. No, He that hath promised to *give him grace and glory*, hath also said, *No good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly*, *Psal.* 84. 11. Their Bill of fare here is provided as well as their Inheritance hereafter. Now all that I shall do here is to put a compass into your hand, by the help of which you may steer your course safely, when you are bound in your requests to either point of the Promise, whether it be for temporal or spiritual mercies. And that I may not run you beside the true channel upon Rocks or Sands, I shall touch the Needle of that Compass I would commend to your use with the Loadstone of the Scripture, from which we may gather a four-fold similitude to be used in our request, for spiritual and temporal good things promised; and a three-fold dissimilitude also. First, a four-fold similitude. I.

First, Whether thou prayest for the one or the other, thou must pray in the sense of thy own unworthiness, for thou deservest neither. When Christ prays for us, he pleads as an Advocate for justice, because he paied before he prays, and asks but what he gives the price for; but we poor creatures are beggars, and must crave all as pure alms, for the mony comes not out of our purse that made the purchase; neither was God the Father bound to engage his Son, or the Son to engage himself in our recoverie, who were fallen by forfeiture into the hands of divine justice. So that Mercy is the onely plea, thou, who art a sinner, canst make with God. Thou maist with man stand upon thy desert, thus *Jacob* claimed his wages at *Labans* hand but when he hath to do I.

with God, he changeth his plea, and sues *sub formâ pauperis*, *I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shewn thy servant*, Gen. 32. 10. So *Daniel*, *We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.* No blessing so great but may be obtained where mercy is the plea, and none so little that we merit. If thou wouldst therefore beg any thing at Gods hand, confess thou deservest nothing. Then are we fit to receive great things from God, when we are least in our own eyes; then neareſt the Crown, when we judge our selves unworthy of a crust. The proud *Pharisee* brought his righteousness in his praier to God, and carried away his sin bound upon him; the *Publican* brought his sin in his humble confession, and carries away his absolution and justification with him. Thus God crosseth his hands like *Jacob* in giving his blessings.

2. Secondly, In both thou must pray in faith, for both spiritual and temporal blessings are promised, and therefore thou art to believe, that God will be as faithful & punctual in the performance of less the promises that concern this life, as in the more weighty matters which respect thy eternal happiness in the other; indeed he promiseth spiritual blessings in *specie*, grace and glory he will give; but temporal enjoyments in *valore*, either in kind or value; *No good thing will he with-hold*: And it is fit he should judge when a temporal enjoyment will be good for us, and when it will be better to give some other thing in the lieu of it. Hence that method in our Lords Prayer, first to pray, *Thy will be done*, before we pray, *Give us this day our daily bread.* But the Seal is the same which ratifies temporal promises with that which he sets to spiritual, his Truth and Faithfulness are as deeply obliged to perform temporal promises, according to the tenure in which they are made, as to make good the other. And therefore we are as strongly to acquiesce in his care and providence for our protection and provision here, as for our salvation hereafter; else he had done his people wrong to take them off from an anxious care for those things, which he meant not to charge his providence with. Certainly if he bids us, *Be careful for none of these things, but only let our requests be made known to him*, he intends not our loss by our ease, but thereby would have us understand and believe, that he will take the care upon himself, and give us at last

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a full account of his love and faithfulnes in the issue of his providence, how all was disposed for our best advantage.

Thirdly, We must joyn our endeavour in the use of all means with our prayers, whether they be put up for spiritual or temporal blessings. Lazy beggars are not to be relieved at our door, 2 *Thess.* 3. 10. *This We commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.* And certainly God will not bid them welcom to his dore, whom he would have us deny at ours. We must pray with our hand at the Pump, or the ship will sink in sight of our prayers. Is it temporal subsistence thou praiest for? pray and work, or pray and starve. Dost thou think to set God at work, whilst thou sittest with thy hand in thy bosome? Those two Proverbs in *Solomon* are observable, *The diligent hand makes rich*, *Prov.* 10. 4. and *vers.* 22 *The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.* He that praies but is not diligent, is not like to be rich; he that is diligent but prays not, may be rich, but he cannot be blessed with his riches; but he that obtains his riches by sincere prayer in conjunction with his diligence, is rich by the blessing of God, and shall escape the sorrow which the worldling lays up with his mony; yea, though he gets not an estate, yet he hath the blessing of God, and that makes him rich when there is no mony in his purse. *Again*, Is it any spiritual blessing thou prayest for? Wouldst thou have more knowledge in the things of God? think not it will drop into thy mind without endeavour. *Daniel* studied as well as prayed, his eyes were one while on the book, and another while lift up to heaven in prayer, *Dan.* 9. 2. *Many shall run too and fro, and knowledge shall be encreased*, *Dan.* 12. 4. It is got by running from one means to another; as the Merchants ship takes in some of her fraught at one port, some at another, so the Christian gets some light in a Sermon, some in a Conference, some in one duty, some in another. And he that takes up one duty, but through sloth neglects the rest, saves but his pains to lose his gains. Sometimes God is found in this duty, and sometimes in that, on purpose to keep up the credit of all, that we wave none. 3.

Fourthly, Our requests for both must be spiced with thanksgiving; *Let your requests be made known with thanksgiving*, *Phil.* 4. and 1 *Thess.* 5. *In every thing give thanks.* Art thou praying for the love and favour of God? Bless God thou art where it 4.

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may be obtained, and not in hell paſt hope or help. Is it health thou deſireſt? Bleſs God for life; *It is the Lords mercy we are not conſumed.* No condition on earth can be of ſo ſad a colour, in which there may not ſome eye of white, ſome mixture of mercy be found interwoven. *Puræ tenebræ*, utter darkneſs without any ſtricture of mercy is found in hell alone. Come not therefore to pray, till you know alſo what to praiſe God for. As God hath an open hand to give, ſo he hath an open eye to ſee who comes to his door, and to diſcern between the thankful beggar, and the unthankful. Will God give more to him, on whom all is loſt that he hath formerly beſtowed? Indeed he doth do good to the evil and unthankful, but it is not a gracious return of their praiers, but an act of his common providence, of which they will have little comfort when he brings the bounty of his providence in judgment againſt them, to aggravate their ſins, and encreaſe their torment.

CHAP. LI.

Contains a three-fold diſſimilitude and difference to be made in framing our requeſts for temporal and ſpiritual mercy.

NOw follows a three-fold diſſimilitude which we are to obſerve in framing our requeſts for ſpiritual and temporal mercies.

1. Firſt, Temporal mercies are chiefly to be deſired for the ſake of ſpiritual, but Spiritual mercies for themſelves, and not for temporal advantages. *Firſt*, Temporal chiefly to be deſired for the ſake of ſpiritual bleſſings, and not their own. The traveller deſires a horſe, not for it ſelf ſo much as for the convenience of his journey he is to go. Thus the Chriſtian,

Christian, when praying for temporal things, should desire them as helps in his way and passage to heaven. I do not say it is unlawful to desire life, health, and other comforts of this life, for the suitableness that these have to our natural affections, and to supply our outward necessities; but to desire them onely for this is low and base, it is the meer cry of the creature; the Ravens thus cry, and all the beasts of the field seek their meat of God; that is, they desire the preservation of their lives, and make their moan when they want that which should support them. And these creatures being made for no higher end, than the enjoyment of these particular narrow good things, they observe the Law of their Creation. But thou art an intellectual being, and by thy immortal soul, which is a spiritual substance, thou art as near a kin to the Angels in heaven, as thou art by thy meaner bodily part to the beasts, yea, allied to God thy Maker, not onely made by him, as they were, but for him, which they are not. He is thy chief good, and therefore thou infinitely dishonourest him, and thy self too, if thou canst set down short of him in thy desires. *Nihil bonum sine summo bono*, nothing should be good to thee without God, who is thy chief good. *Non placent tibi mea, sine mecum; nec tua mihi, sine tecum*; thus shouldst thou say and pray, O Lord, as all my gifts and services do not please thee, except with them I give thee my self; so none of these gifts of thy bounty can content me, except with them thou wilt bestow thy self on me. Now this regular motion of the heart in praying for temporals is to be found onely in those, whose inward wheels (I mean powers and faculties) are set right by the hand of divine grace. Man in his corrupt state is like *Nebuchadnezzar* at grass, he hath a Beasts heart, that craves no more than the satisfaction of his sensual appetite; but when renewed by grace, then his understanding returns to him, by which he is enabled in praying for temporals, to elevate his desires to a higher pitch and nobler end. Doth sick *David* pray that some further time may be added to the lease of his temporal life? it is not out of a fond love to this world, or the carnal entertainments of it, but to prepare himself the better for another life; *O spare me a little that I may recover strength, before I go hence and be no more, Psal.* 39. 13. Is he comforted with hopes of a longer stay here? it is not any of this worlds carnal pleasures that kindles this joy in his holy breast, but the advantage

advantage that thereby he shall have for praising God in the land of the living. *Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God, Psal.* 42. 11. The Saint hath as quick a sence to taste the sweetness of a temporal mercy as another, but his heart being spiritual, and so acquainted with higher enjoyments, he desires with *Luther*, that God would not put him off with these shells of blessings. O how few thus pray for temporals! most are but progging for their lusts, while praying for them, *Jam.* 4. 3. *Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.* One is sick, and prays for health that he may be again at his pots or harlots; another is childless, and he would have an heir, to uphold the pride and grandeur of his house, but not the encrease of Christs family in the world; a third would be a greater man in the world, and for what? may be, that having more power he may take the fuller revenge on his enemies, that now are out of his reach, and others that bring not their sacrifice with so evil a mind, yet look no higher than their carnal contentment in the enjoyment they would have, as appears by their carriage in the use of it. Thus the Mariners in a Sea-storm, *Psal.* 107. *They cry unto the Lord in their trouble*, and when they have their life given them as they desire, *then they are glad, because they are quiet*, and God hears no more of them now their turn is served, a plain evidence that they were selvish and carnal in their prayer for this mercy, because they improve it not for a spiritual end: Which makes the Psalmist break out into that holy option and vote, *vers.* 31. *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness!* But much more abominable is it to pray for spiritual mercies for the sake of some temporal advantage we hope to have by them: Thus *Simon Magus* desired the gifts of the holy Ghost, that he might be τὶς μέγας, a man of fame and name. And do not some labour to bring the Gospel to Town, as an expedient to mend their takings in their shop; others pray for the assistances of the Spirit, and project their own praise by the means, basely perverting those holy things to secular advantages? O horrid baseness! as if one should desire a Princes Robe to stop an Oven with it. This is, as *Austin* saith, *Uti Deo, ut fruamur mundo.* To make God the stirrup, and the creature our saddle.

Those spiritual blessings which are intrinsecal to our happiness, and indispensably necessary to our salvation, these we are

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to pray for with an undeniable importunity; such are pardon of sin, the love and favour of God, and the sanctifying graces of the Spirit; to be cold or indifferent in our prayers for these, is a great wickedness. The Promise will bear us out in our greatest importunity, *Psal.* 105. 4. *Seek ye the Lord and his strength, seek his face evermore. Rev.* 22. 17. *Whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely. Tantum possumus in negotio Religionis, quantum volumus.* Nothing loseth us these mercies more, than weak velleities, and faint desires of them. But our prayers for temporal blessings must be with a latitude of submission to the will of God, because they are promised conditionally. The promise is the foundation of our faith, the superstructure therefore of our prayers must not jet beyond it. This was *Israel*'s sin, *Who shall give us flesh to eat? Numb.* 11. 18. God had indeed promised to feed them in the wilderness, but not to give them every dish their wanton palate craved; and therefore when Gods Bill of fare contents them not, but they cry for flesh, they have their desire, but sour sauce with it; for *while the meat was yet in their mouthes, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, Psal.* 78. 31. thus they were fed for the slaughter by the meat they inordinately lusted after. O take heed of peremptory praiers for any temporal enjoyment, for thereby thou beggest but a rod for thy own back. *Rachel* must have children or else she dies, and she at last hath two, but dies in travel of the latter. It was a smart saying of one to his wife, who passionately desired a son, and had one at last but none of the wisest, *Wife* (saith he) *thou hast long passionately desired a boy, and now thou hast one that will always be a boy.* God may justly set some print of his anger on that mercy, which he answers our peremptorie praiers with. Why alas, must we needs have that which we must needs lose, or shall not enjoy while we have it?

Thirdly, Those spiritual blessings which are intrinsecal to the Saints happiness, are to be prayed for with boundless desires; not, Give me thus much grace and I will trouble thee for no more: No, God gives a little grace, not to stop our mouth, but to open it wider for more. Yet alas, how unreasonably reasonable are most in this particular? so much holiness contents them as will like salt keep them from putrifying in gross sins, that they be not unsavoury to the nostrils of their neighbours, or as will 3.

save them from the lash of a tormenting conscience; like School-boys, that care for no more of their lesson than will save a whipping. Alas, this is not to desire it at all; it is thy credit abroad, and thy quiet within thou desirest, and the other but to help thee to these. He that knows the true worth of grace, thinks he hath never enough till satisfied with it in glory. *Paul* had more than many of his brethren, yet prays, and presseth as hard after more as if he had none at all, *Phil.* 3. 13, 14. But in temporal enjoyments, we are to stint our desires, and not let out all the sails of our affections when praying for them. A gracious heart is as unwilling to have too much of these, as afraid of having too little; *Give me neither riches nor poverty, but food convenient for me, Prov.* 30. I think not a Saint but could cheerfully say Amen to this prayer of *Agur*, I am sure he ought. That house is best seated, which stands neither on the bleak top of the hill, nor on the wet bottom. The nature of these temporal good things is enough to convince any wise man, that the mean is best. They are not the Christians Fraught but his Ballast, and therefore are to be desired to poise, not load the vessel; they are not his portion, Heaven is that, but his spending-mony in his journey thither; and what Traveller that is wise desires to carry any greater charge about him than will pay for his quarters.

CHAP.

CHAP. LII.

Of Deprecatory Prayer in particular, how we are to deprecate Evil in five particulars.

THe second branch in the petitionary part of prayer is Deprecation, wherein we desire of God in the Name of Christ the removal of some evil felt or feared, inflicted or threatned. So that Evil is the object of Deprecation. Here I shall briefly point at the evils to be deprecated, and how we are to frame our requests to God in deprecating of them. All evil is comprehended in these two, *Sin*, or *Suffering*.

First, Sin; This indeed is the evil of evils, against which chiefly we are to let flie the arrows of our praiers. This is the onely thing that is intrinsically evil in its own nature, Suffering is rather evil to us than in it self, and our sufferings have both their being and malignity from the evil of our sins; had there been no sin, there had been no suffering; where that ceaseth, this is not to be found. No sorrow in heaven, because no sin. These, like Twins, live and die together. *If thou dost evil, sin lies at the door*; that is, if thou dost the evil of sin, prepare to meet with the evil of suffering. Now in sin, two things to be deprecated, Guilt, and Filth.

First, Guilt, this is the proper effect and consequent of every sin; when ever any sin is committed, there is guilt contracted, whereby the creature becomes obnoxious to the wrath of God; and this guilt wears not off by length of time, but continues bound upon the sinner, till God by an act of pardoning mercy absolves him; so that though the act of sin be transient, and passeth away as soon as the fact is committed, yet the creature is in the bond of his iniquity, held with this chain of guilt as a prisoner to divine justice, till he by faith and repentance suits out

his pardon; even as a felon, who may be is not presently after the fact taken and brought into judgment, yet abides a debtor to the Law where-ever he is, till he can obtain his pardon. Now need I speak any thing, to set out the dismal and deplored condition of a soul under guilt, thereby to provoke you to pray for the removal of it? There is no mountain so heavie as the guilt of the least sin is to an awakened conscience; better thy house were haunted with devils, than thy soul with guilt. If thy conscience tells thee thou art in the bond of iniquity, thou canst not but be in the gall of bitterness, they are joyned together, *Act.* 8. 23. Guilt is a burden, which the sinner can neither stand under, nor throw off, one compares him to a beast stung with a *Gad-fly*, fain would he run from his pain, but still he finds it in him. This lies throbbing in his soul like a thorn in the flesh, and will not let him rest by day, or sleep by night; he turns himself on his bed as *Regulus* in his barrel stuck with nails, not an easie plat that he can find in it. This makes him afraid of every disease that comes to Town, Pox, or Plague, lest it should arrest him, and bring him by death to judgment; his guilt makes him think every bush a man, and every man a messenger of divine vengeance to slay him. The mark that God set upon guilty *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. 15. is by many interpreters conceived to be a trembling heart, made visible by a gashly countenance, and discomposed carriage of his outward man: And that passage, *vers.* 12. *A fugitive and a vagabond thou shalt be in the earth*, the Septuagint read thus, στενων καὶ τρέμων ἔσῃ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, thou shalt be sighing and trembling in the earth. No convulsion-fit so distorts the body, as sin doth the soul.

Now in this prayer against Guilt, and for pardon, observe these particulars.

1. First, Pray with a deep sense and sorrow for thy sins. The worst nonsense in prayer is of the heart, when that hath no sense of the sin he deprecates, or of the mercy he desires. Nothing more hardens the heart of God against our prayer, than the hardness of our heart in prayer; and on the contrary, no such way to melt God into pity, as for our own hearts to dissolve into sorrow. He that would have us *give wine to the sad of heart*, *Prov.* 31. saves this vessel (the promise I mean of pardoning mercy, which holds the sweetest wine in Gods cellar) *to revive the heart of the contrite ones*, *Isa.* 57. A tear in the eye for sin adorns the

the creature, more than a jewel in his ear, and his prayer more than all the embroiderie of expreſſions in it can do. While the *Publican* ſmote his own breaſt, he got into Gods boſom, and carried a pardon home with him. Will Chriſt drop his blood to procure thy pardon, who canſt ſhed no tears for thy ſin? The truth is, here lies the difficultie of the work, not how to move God, but how to get the ſinners own heart melted. It is harder to get ſin felt by the creature, than the burden, when felt, removed, by the hand of a forgiving God. Never was tender-hearted Chirurgeon more willing to take up the vein, and bind up the wound of his fainting patient when he hath bled enough, then God is by his pardoning mercy to eaſe the troubled ſpirit of a mourning penitent. It is one rule he gives his ſervants in their practice upon their ſpiritual patients, to beware of making too great an evacuation in the ſouls of poor ſinners by exceſſive humiliation, leſt thereby the ſpirits of their faith be too much weakned; 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. *Sufficient to ſuch a man is this puniſhment, &c. So that ye ought rather to forgive and comfort him, leſt perhaps ſuch a one ſhould be ſwallowed up with over-much ſorrow.*

Secondly, Juſtifie and clear God in all the expreſſions of his diſpleaſure for thy ſins. Thou doſt perhaps carry the marks of his anger on thy fleſh in ſome outward judgment, or, which is worſe, the terrors of the Lord have taken hold of thy ſoul, and like poiſoned arrows lie burning in thy conſcience, where they ſtick; acknowledge him juſt, and all this that is come upon thee *leſs then thy iniquities have deſerved, Ezr.* 9. The way to eſcape the fatal ſtroke of his ax, is to kiſs the block; clear his juſtice, and fear not but his mercy will ſave thy life. Thou haſt a promiſe on thy ſide, *If their uncircumciſed hearts be humbled, and they accept of the puniſhment of their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant, Levit.* 26. 41, 42. *David* took this courſe and ſped, *Pſal.* 51. *I acknowledge my tranſgreſſions, verſ.* 3. and why is he ſo willing to ſpread his ſins in his confeſſion before the Lord? ſee *verſ.* 4. *That thou mightſt be juſtified when thou ſpeakeſt, and be clear when thou judgeſt*: He would have all the world know, that God did him no wrong in the judgments that came upon him, he takes all the blame upon himſelf. 2.

Thirdly, Take heed thou prayeſt not with a reſervation, be ſure thou renounceſt what thou wouldſt have God remit. God 3.

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will never remove the guilt so long as thou entertainest the sin. What Prince will pardon his treason that means to continue a traitor. It is desperate folly to desire God to forgive, what thou intendest to commit. Thou hadst as good speak out, and ask leave to sin with impunity, for God knows the language of thy heart, and needs not thy tongue to be an interpreter. Some Princes have misplaced their high favours to their heavy cost, as the *Emperor Leo Armenius*, who pardoned that monster of ingratitude *Michael Balbus*, and was the same night in which he was delivered out of prison murdered by him. But the great God is subject to no mistake in his Government, never got hypocrite a pardon in the disguise of a Saint. He will call thee by thy own name, though thou comest to him in the semblance of a penitent. *Come in thou wife of Jeroboam*, said the *Prophet*. Hypocrisie is too thin a vail to blind the eyes of the Almighty. Thou maist put thy own eyes out, so as not to see him; but thou canst never blind his eyes that he should not see thee. And as long as God loves himself, he must needs hate the hypocrite; and if he hates him, surely he will not pardon him. The pardoned soul and the sincere are all one, *Psal* 32. 2. *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

4. Fourthly, Make Christ thy plea. Pardon of sin is a favour not known in the first Covenant, Do, and live; Sin, and die, were all its contents; no room left for an after-game by that Law. The Gospel-Covenant is our *Tabula post naufragium*, the onely plank by which we may recover the shore after our miserable wrack. This Covenant is founded in Christ, who hath upon agreement with his Father undertook to answer the demands of the Law, and happily performed what he undertook; upon which the Gospel is preached, and pardon promised to all that repent and believe on him; *Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, Act.* 5. 31. *Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*, *Rom.* 3. 25. As therefore when Christ interceeds for poor sinners, he carries his blood with him and presents it to God, for the price of that forgiveness he desires for them, so thou maist bring the same blood in the hand of thy faith, when thou prayest for the pardon of thy sins, for *without blood there is no remission*, *Heb.* 9. This is the more to be heeded, because many out of ignorance, and some from a corrupt principle,

ciple, apply themselves in their prayers to the absolute goodness and mercy of God for pardon: Ask them, why they hope to be forgiven, and they will tell you, God is good, and they hope he will be merciful to them, seeing his nature is so gracious. But alas, they forget that he is just as well as merciful, and mercy will not act but with the consent of his justice: Now the onely *salvo* for the justice of God is the satisfaction of Christ. *God hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, Rom.* 3. 26. So that to desire God to forgive thee thy sin without the intervening of Christs satisfaction, is to desire God to be unjust, and pardon thee with the loss of his own honor; and how welcom thou art like to be that comest to him on such an errand, is easie to think.

Fifthly and lastly, Take no denial in this thy request, but pray for it with unwearied importunity. It is a mercy thou canst not want, it is more necessary than thy very being, better never to be than ever be unpardoned. Think but a little on thy dismal condition, while guilt is not taken off, and thy pardon not obtained; and it is impossible that thou shouldst be a cold faint suitor for this mercy of mercies. Know then, while unpardoned thou art Gods prisoner, all the plagues written in the Law cleave as close to thee as thy girdle to thy loyns, every moment thou maist fear they should take hold upon thee, as thou walkest in thy house, sittest at thy table, or liest on thy bed. Where canst thou be safe who hast God thine enemy? Can the bread resist him that eats it? or the tree withstand the ax of the feller? truly no more canst thou the wrath of an avenging God: Is it not he that holds the stoutest devils in chains? he who can kindle a fire in thy own bones & bosom, and make thee consume like lime with the inward burning of thy self-tormenting thoughts. Is he not a righteous God, whose justice binds him in the distributions of justice, to be exact according to the sinners demerit? Is he not the everlasting God? not a sorry creature, who may threaten thee to day, and be dead himself to morrow, but Eternity it self, who ever lives to take vengeance on sinners, out of whose hands thou canst not escape by dying. In earthly Courts when the man dies, his cause dies with him, because out of their jurisdiction, and past their summons: But at death thou fallest into the hands of the living God, who 5.

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will pursue his quarrel with thee in the other world also. No sooner is thy soul abandoned of thy body, and turned out of its earthly house, but it shall return to God to receive its doom. Neither shall thy body long rest in the grave, where it is earth, but be called forth to share with the soul in torment, whose partner it had been in sin. The parting of these at death to a guilty soul is sad enough, but their meeting again at the great day of judgment will be much more dismal: For husband and wife that have joyn'd in some bloody murther, to be attached and sent to several prisons in order to their trial, must needs fill them with the fear and terror of their approaching judgment; but much more dreadful is it to them when brought forth to receive their sentence, and suffer at the same gibbet together. At death, the sinners body is disposed of to one prison, his soul to another, and both to meet again at the great day of Assize for the world, then to be sent by the final sentence of the Judge to everlasting flames in hells fiery furnace, where after the poor wretch hath experimented a thousand million of years the weight of Gods just vengeance, he shall find himself no nearer the end of his misery then he was the first day wherein his torment commenced. Then death will be desired as a favour, but it shall flee from him, his misery being both intolerable and interminable. By this time I suppose a pardon will be thought worth thy having, and too good to be lost by sluggish sleepy praying for it. When therefore thou hast chafed thy soul thus into a sense of the indispensable necessity of this mercy, then take up a holy resolution to lay thy siege close to the Throne of grace, and never to rise till God open the gates of his mercy to thee. As 'tis so necessary thou canst not want it, so thou hast the promise of a faithful God that thou shalt not miss it, upon the timely and sincere seeking of it. *If we confess, he is just and faithful to forgive.* Prayers and tears are the weapons with which the Almighty may be overcome. *Manasseh*, who could not on his Throne (when he sinned and flouted it out against God) defend himself from the justice of God, yet in his dungeon and fetters, greatly humbling himself before the Lord, obtained his mercy. So *Israel, When he sinned he died, but when he spake trembling, then he was exalted*, Hos. 13. 1.

CHAP.

CHAP. LIII.

How to Deprecate the defiling power of sin.

The second thing in sin to be deprecated, is the defiling power of it. He that desires not to be purged from the filth of sin, prays in vain to be eased of the guilt. If we love the work of sin, we must like the wages also. A false heart could be willing to have his sin covered, but the sincere desires his nature may be cured and cleansed. *David* begg'd a clean heart as well as a quiet conscience, *Psal.* 51. *blot out all mine iniquities*; *Create in me a clean heart, O God*, *vers.* 10. he desires water to purifie his heart, as well as blood to sprinkle and pacifie his conscience. Now in framing thy requests as to this, observe these particulars.

First, Be sure thou comest with a deep abhorrence of thy self for that sin-filth which cleaves to thee. This is called, *Knowing the plague of a mans own heart*, 1 *King.* 8. 38. when a creature is affected and afflicted with the sense of his corruptions, as if he had so many plague-sores running upon him, and loaths himself for them, as much as *Job* did for the boyls and sores with which his body was covered. The *Leper* was commanded in order to his cure, to put himself into a mourners habit, *Levit.* 13. 45. *His garments shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering on his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean.* Why all this, but to express the deep sense of his sin and misery? Look upon the Saints in Scripture, and you shall find this was their way to abase themselves in their prayers, with the greatest self-abhorrency that was possible; penitent *David* takes the fool, yea, the beast unto himself, he knows not how to speak bad enough of himself, *So foolish was I and ignorant, even as a beast before thee*, *Psal.* 73. 22. Holy *Job* cries out, *I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes*, *chap.* 42. 6. Others blush, and as much ashamed to be

seen in the presence of God, as one that had fallen into some puddle or Jakes would be in that pickle to come before his Prince.

2. Secondly. In praying against thy lusts, look thy heart goes with thy tongue. In nothing do our hearts put more cheats upon us than in our prayers, and in no requests more than in those which are levelled against our lusts. That is least oftentimes intended, which is most pretended. And truly we had need be well acquainted with our selves, before we can find the bottom of our designes. *Austin* confesseth, when he was a young man, and forced by conviction in his conscience to pray, that God would deliver him out of the bondage of his lust, yet the secret whispers of his heart were, *Non adhuc Domine, Not yet Lord*; he was afraid God should take him at his word. Thus the hypocritical *Jews* first *set up their idols in their hearts, and then enquired of the Lord*, *Ezek.* 14. 1. this is a great wickedness. And it were a just, though a heavy plague, for God to answer such according to the secret vote of their hearts, by giving them up to those lusts which they inwardly crave. When *Paul* begs prayers for himself, to embolden them in their requests for him, he assures them of his sincerity, *Pray for us, for We trust that We have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly*, *Hebr.* 13. 18. as if he had said, I durst not make you my spokesmen to God, if my heart did check me that I did secretly comply with any sin, and did not mean in all things to live honestly. How then canst thou have the face to go thy self to God on an errand, to desire that of him which thou wouldst be loth to have?

Quest. But how may we come to know that our hearts are sincere or hypocritical, in praying against the defiling power of sin?

Answ. 1. First, Observe whether thy prayer be uniform, laid against all sin, one lust as well as another. Sincerity makes not here a balk, and there a furrow, is not hot against one lust and cold against another, but goes through-stitch in the work; *It hates every false way, Psal.* 119. 104. It shoots its arrows at the whole flock, and singles not this sin out in his prayers which he would have taken, and that left; *Let no iniquity have dominion over me, vers.* 132. he knows, if all his chains were knockt off, and onely one left upon him, he should be as true a slave to Satan as if all the other were still on. He prays not against one sin because a great one, and pleads for another because it is a little one. The dust

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and rubbish help to fill up the wall as well as the great stones; little sins contribute as well as great, to make up the partition-wall between God and the creature; every little speck blemisheth the garment, and every penny encreaseth the sums: So little sins defile the soul, and swell the sinners account; therfore he prays against them as well as the other. *David*, who desired to be kept back from *presumptuous sins*, did also beg to *be cleansed from his secret sins*, *Psal.* 19.

Secondly, Observe whether thy heart stand firmly resolved to renounce that sin thou prayest God to subdue. The sincere Christian binds himself as well as labours, to engage God against his sin. Indeed that prayer is a blank which hath not a vow in it, *Thou hast heard my vows*, *Psal.* 61. 5. *i. e.* his prayers, which are always to be put up with vows. Is it a mercy thou prayest him to give? if sincere thou wilt vow to praise him for it, and serve him with it. Is it a sin thou prayest against? except thou jugglest with God, thou wilt vow as well as pray against it. *Remove from me the way of lying*, *Psal.* 119. 29. there is *Davids* deprecation; now mark his promise and vow, *I have chosen the way of truth*, *thy judgments I have laid before me*, *vers.* 30. While he prays against the way of lying, he choseth the way of truth. 2.

Observe thirdly, Whether thou beest vigorous in the use of all appointed means to mortifie the lust thou prayest against. Resolutions in the time of prayer are good, when backt with strenuous endeavours, else but a blind for a false heart to cover it self with. *Sampson* did not onely pray he might be avenged on his enemies, but set his hands to the pillars of the house. He that hath bid thee pray against thy lust, hath bid thee shun the occasions of it; *Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house, lest thou give thy honor unto others*, *Prov.* 5 8. that is, lest thou be hooked in to her by the occasion. Thus *Joseph*, that he might not be drawn to lie with his Mistress, would not stay alone in the room with her, *Gen.* 39. So *Prov.* 23. 20. *Be not amongst wine-bibbers*; and *vers.* 31. *Look not on the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup*, because looking may breed liking. Now art thou conscientiously careful to keep out of the way that leads to the sin, and to shun the occasion that might betray thee into the hands of that lust thou prayest against? Certainly, he that would not have his house blown up, will not set his gun- 3.

powder in the chimney-corner. *Again*, God who bids thee pray againſt thy luſts, commands thee alſo to take the ſword of his Word, by meditating on it, and applying it cloſe to thy heart and conſcience, to cut them down, and get victory over them. Thus did *David*, he *hid the word in his heart that he might not ſin.* Thou prayeſt againſt covetouſneſs, O that God would rid thy heart of it: Well, what doſt thou towards thy own delivery from this baſe luſt? Here is a ſword put into thy hand, whoſe edge is ſharp enough to cut and kill it, if thou wilt lay it on in good earneſt. This ſets forth the vanity of the creature, how vile and baſe a ſin covetouſneſs is; takes away all occaſion of inordinate deſires and cares for the world by many ſweet promiſes, what he hath laid up in another world for us, and what care in his providence he will take for us in this life. *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs, and be content with ſuch things as ye have; for he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee nor forſake thee, Hebr.* 13. Now what uſe doſt thou make of this weapon? doſt thou ſtrengthen thy aſſent to the truth of theſe promiſes? Labour to affect thy heart with the ſweetneſs of them, and then draw forth this ſword to defend thy ſelf againſt this luſt, when the enemy comes with a temptation to it? if ſo, thou wert ſincere in thy prayer. A falſ heart contents it ſelf with a few idle lazy prayers againſt his luſt, but is afraid to uſe this ſword againſt it; or if he doth, he ſtrikes with the back and not the edge, or laies his ſtroke ſo favourably on, that it ſhall not much endanger the life of his ſin; like a *Mountebank*, that will be ſure to make no worſe wound in his ſide than his Balſom will in a day or two cure. Now to raiſe thy heart to the greater vehemency in praying againſt thy luſts, labour deeply to affect thy heart what a fearful plague it is (indeed of all other incomparably the greateſt) for a ſoul to be given up of God to the power of his luſts. This conſideration, if any, will make thee lay cloſe ſiege to God, and ſet upon him with the utmoſt importunity, knowing thou art an undone creature if thou ſpeedeſt not in thy errand. When God intends to ſmite home, he takes his aim at the heart, he gives the creature over to his luſts: Thus he hardned *Pharaoh* to a final obſtinacy, *Exod.* 9. 24. *I will ſend all my plagues on thy heart.* They did not onely light upon the beaſts and fruits of the field, or upon their own bodies, but chiefly on their hearts and ſpirits, hardning them into obſtinacy to their deſtruction. And

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this indeed is to send all plagues in one; other plagues that reach onely to estate or body, are consistent with the love and favour of God, he can smite the body, and smile on the soul; blast the mans estate, and bless him with spiritual riches, make him poor in the world, and rich in faith. But, he that is given up to his lusts is abhorred of God. A Saint may be delivered up to Satan, *ut flictori*, to correct him, for the destruction of the flesh and saving of his spirit; but it is the brand of a Reprobate to be delivered up to Satan *ut Domino*, that his lusts may have full power over him; which judiciary act of God portends the sinners destruction, *Deut.* 2. 30. 2 *Thess.* 2. 11. Outward plagues are sometimes in the sinners mouth as a bridle to restrain him from sin, but this is a spur that makes them more mad after their lusts, it takes away the sense of sin, and then the wretch plays the devil, nothing will stop him in his way, but to hell he will go over hedge and ditch.

Pray against the power of thy lusts as a branch of the Gospel-covenant God is not bound by the first Covenant to stir a foot for mans help. Man went of his own accord over to the devils quarters, he deserted God, and chose a new Lord, and in his hands God might have left him without offering any help for his rescue. It was not any tie that man had upon God by the Covenant of nature which obliged him, but his own free grace that moved him to undertake his recovery. And this he doth by making a new Covenant on the ruines of the old. So that whoever will pray against his lusts with success, must first become a Covenanter with God, by accepting the terms upon which God in it offers to save us from our sins, and they are Faith and Repentance; when the soul doth thus face about from his sins to close with Christ, then he becomes a Covenanter with God and may with faith call God into the field for his help against this huge host of lusts and devils that come against him. Gods Chariots are his, the whole militia of heaven is engaged in his quarrel. *Sin shall not have dominion over you*, and why? *for ye are not under the law, but under grace*, *Rom.* 6. 14. that is, You are not under the Law-covenant made with *Adam*, but under the Gospel-covenant made with Christ, and through him with all believers. O how many prayers against sin are lost, for want of well understanding this grand notion of the Gospel? A great cry is made, and complaint by many of their sins to God, and victory over them pretended to be desired;

fired; yet they live, and grow ſtronger every day than other; and what is the reaſon? alas! they ſtand not in a federal relation to God, neither take they any care how to get into it. Will a Prince raiſe an Army to fight for he knows not who? indeed, if his ſubjects or allies be in diſtreſs, he is ready to ſtep in for their ſuccour; but ſtrangers cannot expect he ſhould do this for them. Leagues are made before aſſiſtance deſired. God firſt promiſeth to bring *Iſrael under the bond of his covenant*, *Ezek.* 20. 37. and then *verſ.* 41 that *he will accept them with their ſweet ſavour*. *David* knew this very well, that the carnal world are abandoned by God, to be trod under the foot of every luſt; and therefore when he prays God would order his ſteps in his Word, and let no iniquity have dominion over him, he deſires it as a favour peculiar to thoſe that were near and dear to him, *Deal with me as thou uſeſt to do unto thoſe that love thy Name*, *Pſal.* 119. 132.

Pray not onely againſt the power of ſin, but for the power of holineſs alſo. A naughty heart may pray againſt his ſins, not out of any inward enmity to them, or love to holineſs, but becauſe they are troubleſome gueſts to his conſcience. Believe it for a certain truth, his zeal is falſe that ſeems hot againſt ſin, but is key-cold to holineſs. A City is rebellious that keeps their rightful *Prince* out, though it receives not his enemy in: Nay, the devil needs not fear, but at laſt he ſhall make that ſoul his Gariſon again, out of which for a while he ſeems ſhut, ſo long as it ſtands empty, and is not filled with ſolid grace, *Matth.* 12. 44, 45. What indeed ſhould hinder Satans re-entry into that houſe, which hath none in it to keep him out.

CHAP.

CHAP. LIV.

How to deprecate the evil of suffering Temporal, and Eternal.

THE second object of deprecatory prayer is Suffering; sin brought suffering into the world. Sin is indeed the Elder-Twin, but suffering staid not long after it, for it took it by the heel, presently arresting *Adam* upon the very place where he committed his trespass, and ever since follows it as close as the shadow doth the body. It leaves not the Saint till death parts him and his sin, but pursues the wicked with their sins into the other world also. So that this distribution of suffering into temporal and eternal shall content us at present, they being comprehensive of all the miseries which sin hath brought upon the sons of men. Now my work in this place shall be onely to direct the Christian how to frame his prayer, in deprecating the one and the other also. First, Temporal sufferings, how the Christian is to deprecate and pray against them; which I shall do two ways, *first*, negatively, how he is not; *secondly*, affirmatively, how he may and should pray against them.

SECT. I.

FIrst, Negatively. The Christian is not to pray for an immunity from all temporal sufferings, there is no foundation for such a prayer in the promise; and what God thinks not fit to promise, we must not be bold to ask. Temporal promises are to be understood, saith *Melanchton*, *cum exceptione crucis*. God had one Son

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Son without sin, but he will haye none in this life without suffering. *John* writes himself, *Your brother and companion in tribulation, Rev.* 1. 9. He hath too high an opinion of himself, that would have God lead him dry-shod on a fair causey to heaven, while he sees the rest of his brethren march through thick and thin to the same place. Or who thinks he needs not this thorn-hedge of suffering, to keep him as well as others from wandring out of his way to glory. The rod and ferular are not more needful among children at school, than suffering is to the Saints while in their minority here on earth. If thou wert come to that ripeness of ingenuity as to have worn off all thy childishness, thou shouldst stay here no longer under the lash; but while thou art subject to sin, thou must submit to his disciplinary rod. Valitudinarious bodies can as well spare food as physick, and Saints in this their crazy state may as well live without Ordinances as without sufferings. In a word, to pray absolutely against all suffering, is to desire one of the greatest punishments on this side hell. When God said, *I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, Hos.* 4. 9. he meant them no good by sparing his rod. If we count him an unwise father, that when he puts his child to School indents with his Master not to whip him; surely much more folly were it in thee to desire God to priviledge thee from all suffering.

Secondly, Affirmatively, in these particulars following.

First, Deprecate the vindicative justice and wrath of God in all temporal sufferings. Thus *Jeremiah* shapes his prayer, *Jer.* 10. 24. *O Lord, correct me but in judgment, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.* And *chap.* 17 17. *Be not thou a terror to me, thou art my hope in the day of evil.* He declines not suffering, but deprecates wrath, as if he had said, Let trouble come, but not with this message to tell me that thou art mine enemy; shoot thy darts, my breast is open to receive them, but let them not be envenom'd arrows, headed with thy punitive justice. Without this sting, all suffering is innocent and harmless; but if the creature does fear (though without just cause) that they are shot out of Justices bowe, then they drink up his spirits, and exanimates him presently. *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth, Psal.* 39. That holy woman, 1 *King.* 17, 18. was not so much distressed for her

her ſons death, as for the reflection this ſad providence made upon her conſcience, *Art thou come to call my ſin to remembrance and ſlay my ſon?* Thou canſt not therefore be too paſſionately importunate in deprecating this.

Secondly, Deprecate the ſnare and temptation that ſuffering may expoſe thee to. Satan commonly finds it eaſie to make ſome ſinful impreſſion upon the Saint when he is heat, & his *heart made ſoft* (as *Job* phraſeth it) *in the furnace of affliction.* He is a rare Chriſtian in whom the ſtream of his grace runs clear upon ſuch roylings. *Job* was a man of a thouſand, Gods None-ſuch, *Job 1. None like him in all the earth, a perfect and an upright man*; yet bewrayed many weakneſſes in his troubles, and would have done more, had not God in pity to his poor ſervant taken the devil off, before he had quite run him down. Chriſt teacheth us to pray againſt ſuffering under the notion of temptation, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*; that is, Let us not be led into ſin when we fall into ſuffering; let us not fall into thy hands and Satans together. This diſcovers a holy frame of heart, to be more tender of our conſcience than skin, not ſo much to fear affliction from God, as leſt in it we ſhould behave our ſelves unſeemly and unholily towards him. *Agur* is not ſo much aſhamed to beg, as afraid to ſteal, and ſo take the name of his God in vain, upon which account he chiefly prays againſt poverty, *Prov.* 30. 8, 9. There is nothing loſt by ſerving God firſt, and preferring his honor before our own private intereſt in our prayers. Self-denial is the beſt ſelf-ſeeking, for by neglecting our ſelves for Gods ſake, we oblige him to take the care of us upon himſelf; and he is the onely happy man, who hath his ſtake laid up in Gods hands. 2.

Thirdly, Deprecate the exceſs of ſuffering, that thou beeſt not over-laden, thy burden too heavy for thy back. This is promiſed, thou maiſt therefore preſent it in faith, *Jer.* 46. 28. *I will make a full end of the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in meaſure.* The Patient doth not entrench upon the Phyſicians art, by deſiring him to proportion his doſe according to the weakneſs of his body, if when he hath done this, he acquieſceth in his skill and faithfulneſs for the ſame. Indeed to deſire God to conſider our weakneſs, and then not to rely on his wiſdom and care, but continue jealous 3.

and suspitious, or to murmur at his prescriptions, as if the Physick he gives were too churlish and strong, this makes a dishonourable reflection upon God. Sometimes the Physician exceeds the proportion that his fearful patient thinks strong enough, but withal tells him, You are not so weak as you take your self to be, your body may bear so many grains more in the composition; leave me to my art and all shall be well. Thus God, who knows our frame exactly, deals with his people, and is highly pleased to see them satisfied with what he orders them out, *Job* 1. 22. *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly*; ἐν τούτοις οὐ ἁμαρτεῖν τὸν Θεὸν, so the *Septuagint* read it, he did not impute folly to God; indeed the word תִּפְלָה is a Noun. The meaning of the place is, *Job* did not make any unworthy reflexion upon God for the evils he suffered by his providence, as if any thing were wanting in his care or wisdom, like some rash Physician, who fails either in timeing or tempering his physick.

Fourthly, Thou maist not onely deprecate these evils in thy afflictions, but also pray believingly for a happy issue out of them all. The darkest lane of suffering shall to the Saint have a lightsom end, and all we say is well that ends well. *We have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that he is very pitiful, Jam.* 5. This is that which God so fully intends in all his Saints troubles, that he takes pleasure in thinking of it beforehand; *I know the thoughts that I have toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, Jer.* 29. And that petition comes in a happy time to Court, which finds the King thinking of the very business it prays for.

Sect. II.

2. THe second kind of suffering is eternal in hel, this is the center in which all the lines of sin and of misery meet, the common shoal into which they all disgorge themselves, as Rivers do their streams into the vast ocean; and as Rivers, when they are fallen into the Sea lose their several names in one that comprehends them all, The Ocean. So all the evils of this life, when resolved into this, forget their private names, sickness, pains, poverty,

verty, &c. and are called Hell; not that these are all formally and literally there, but vertually, in that the torment of the damned doth not onely amount to, but beyond expression exceed them all. As in heaven there is no belly-chear, yet a feast; no silks and satins worn, yet all in glorious robes; as silver is in gold, and gold in a jewel, so all these are in heaven, because that which is of infinite more value and worth than such things as are of highest reckoning on earth. Thus the great miseries of this life are incomparably less than the least torment of hell; never can the creature say he is compleatly miserable, till the devouring jaws of that infernal pit enclose him; were the worst of his punishment what he feels here, he might in a manner bless himself; as *Paul* on the contrary saith, he should judge the Saint miserable above others if all his hope were here. But there is the sinners easeless endless state; there is not so much as one well day to release him a while from his pain, but he shall continue for ever in the heighth of his paroxysm; no change of weather, or hope of clearing, but a perpetual storm set in to rain fire and brimstone upon him to all eternity, for so long it will be before the arm of the Almighty is weary of pouring out his wrath, or his heart be brought in love with sin, and reconciled to the sinner. Now in deprecating this, we should endeavour to keep this threefold notion of hell in our thoughts, for which above all we are to desire to be delivered from it.

First, Conceive of hell as a state of sin as well as of suffering, yea, in its utmost heighth. Earth is a middle place betwixt heaven and hell. Neither sin in the wicked, nor grace in the Saint, come here to their full ripeness; grace being an out-landish slip brought from heavens paradice, riseth not to its just heighth and procerity, till it be transplanted and set in its native climate from whence it came. And sin being a brat of hell, comes not to its full complexion and monstrosity, till it be sent back to the place it came from. Here poor wretches are tolled on to sin by the pleasure it promiseth, but there they sin out of malice, for nothing else can invite them, where this morsel is eaten with such sour sauce. On earth the sinner is maidenly, and conceals the venom that is bagg'd in his heart, but in hell he spits it out in blasphemies against heaven. In a word, here he sins with wavering thoughts, and some weak purposes of repenting, but there

he is as desperate as the devil himself, hardned beyond all relenting. Now under this notion thou shouldst pray to be delivered from hell, that thou maist never be one of that damned crew, who think it not enough to fight against God their Maker on earth, but carry the war with them into the other world also, and there continue their feud with implacable enmity to eternity. Certainly the Saints, to whom the motions of sin in this life are so grievous, above all the crosses and losses that befall them, and who count a few years neighbourhood among the wicked so great an affliction, that they cry, *Wo is me that I sojourn in Meshek, and dwell in the tents of Kedar*, must needs deprecate that dismal state with their utmost vehemency of spirit, wherein they should be everlastingly yok'd with sin, and coopt up with unclean sinners, both which they loathe so perfectly. It was the speech of a gracious woman, when on the very marches of death, *O Lord, send me not to hell among such filthy company, which thou knowest I have not liked on earth.* But as for those that can fadge very well with their lusts, and the company of the wicked here, I know not how they can thus deprecate that place, where they shall meet with that which pleaseth them so much on earth. *David, Psal.* 26. first protests his abhorrency against the ways and society of the wicked, *vers.* 4, 5. *I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked* then his zeal for God, and delight he had in his house to praise and serve him, *vers.* 6, 7, 8. after which, he breaks out into this prayer, *vers.* 9. *Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men.* As if he had said, I am not of their knot in my life, O let me not be of their bundle at my death. I have praised thee on earth, send me not to blaspheme thee in hell. I have loved the habitation of thy house here, let me not dwell with unclean spirits hereafter.

2. Secondly, Hell is a state of separation from the blissful presence of God, pray to be delivered from it under this notion, as it is the last, yea, everlasting excommunication of the creature from God. *Go ye curfed*, that is, never to see my sweet face more, called therefore *outer darkness*, because not the least beam or stricture of his favour to enlighten the souls of the damned, nor the least crevis is left open for hope to expect it. The heat of hell fire is not so dismal, as the want of this light, this makes them curfed,

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Go ye curſed; the curſe lies in their departure from God, the fountain of bleſſing, all beſides this were tolerable; would God but caſt one kind look upon thoſe miſerable ſouls, as they ſwim in this lake of fire and brimſtone, it were able to change the property of the place, and the joy thereof were enough to take away the ſence of their torment. The three Worthies in *Daniel* could walk in the fire, having God to bear them company, as if they had been onely in the Sun-ſhine. That which a Saint prizeth moſt in heaven is the preſence of God, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 17. *So ſhall we ever be with the Lord*; and hell is moſt dreaded by them, becauſe a gulph is fixed between the ſouls in it and God, that no communion can be had with him to all eternity. O how few pray againſt hell under this notion! how few cry out with *David*, *Caſt me not away from thy preſence? Pſal.* 51. If this were the thing above all they feared ſhould befall them in the other world, would they ſo willingly live without acquaintance with God in this world? ſurely no.

Thirdly, Hel is a ſtate, wherein the damn'd can never actually ſatisfie Gods juſtice; for their debt being infinite, and they (becauſe creatures) but finite, will ever be paying, but the laſt farthing can never be paid, which is the onely reaſon they lie for ever in priſon, becauſe it can never be ſaid, Now God hath his due. But Chriſt, the Saints pay-maſter, diſcharged their whole debt at once, and took in the bond, which he nailed to his croſs, leaving no back-reckoning unpaid, to bring the believer afterward into any danger from the hands of divine juſtice. Now as an ingenious debtor deſires his freedom at his creditors hands, that thereby he may be capable of paying his debt, as well as to eſcape the miſery that himſelf ſhould endure by his impriſonment. So an ingenious ſoul (and ſuch is every Saint) deprecates hell, as well with an eye to Gods glory, as to his own eaſe and happineſs. Lord, ſaith the ſincere ſoul, if thou packeſt me away to hell, there I ſhall pay thee ('tis true) by my juſt torments ſomething in a dribling way by retail, but never be able to diſcharge the whole ſum; but at Chriſts hands thou maiſt receive to the full, what thy juſtice can demand at mine, and alſo make me thy poor creature a trumpeter of thy praiſe to eternity. O ſend me not to blaſpheme thee among that wretched crue of damned ſouls and unclean ſpirits, who ſo much deſire to joyn with the Quire of holy Angels and Saints, in ſinging Hallelujahs to thy holy and glorious Name. 3.

CHAP.

CHAP. LV.

Of Imprecatory Prayer, and how to be performed.

THe third Branch in petitionary prayer, is Imprecation. A kind of prayer this is, wherein the Christian imprecates the vengeance of God upon the enemies of God and his people; on such a sad and solemn errand are the Saints prayers sometimes sent to heaven, and speed as effectually, as when they go to obtain blessings for themselves and the Church of God. And no wonder, for they are perfumed with Christs merits, and thereby are as acceptable to God as any other they put up in his Name. *Rev.* 8. 4. *And the smoak of the incense which came with the praiers of the Saints, ascended up before God*; now what kind of prayers these were is clear by the next words, *vers.* 5. *And the Angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth, and there were voices; and thundrings, and lightnings, and an earth-quake.* By which is signified the dreadful judgments, which God in answer to his Saints prayers would bring upon the wicked world, whose bloody persecutions of the Church, and fury against the truth of God, made the Saints to cry to heaven for vengeance upon them; and it should inevitably come, as thunder, lightning, and earth-quakes, that can be resisted by no power or policy of the greatest Monarch on earth. Thus, as at the firing of some Canon planted against a City, you may see its turrets or wall come tumbling down; so upon the prayers of the Saints, great judgments were certainly to befall the enemies of God and his Church. Now the path wherein the Christian is here to tread being very narrow, he is to be the more cautious that he steps not awry. He is in this part of prayer which

which is imprecatory, like one that drives a Chariot on the brow of a steep hill, who if he hath not the quicker eye and steadier hand, may soon spoil all. The highest streins of the Saints duty, run neareſt the most dangerous precipices, as the most mysterious truths are soonest perverted into the most damnable errors. I shall therefore first lay down a few particulars, which may serve as a rail to compass in this duty, for the better securing the Christian from falling into any miscarriage about it.

SECT. I.

TAke heed thou dost not make thy private particular enemies the object of thy imprecation; we have no warrant when any wrong us, presently to go and call for fire from heaven upon them. We are bid indeed *to heap coals upon our enemies head*, but they are of love, not of wrath and revenge. *Job* sets a black brand upon this, and clears himself from the imputation of so great a sin, *If I rejoyced at the destruction of him that hated me, neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul, Job* 31. 31. He durst not wish his enemy ill, much less deliberately form a wish into a prayer, and desire God to curse him. Our Saviour hath taught us a more excellent way, *Matth.* 5. 44. *Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you.* I know this is counted a poor sheepish spirit by many of our gallants; go pray for them? no, send them the glove rather, and be revenged on them in a duel by shedding their blood. This is the drink-offering which these sons of pride delight to pour out to their revenge; or curse them to the pit of hell with their God damn them oaths. O tremble at such a spirit as this! The ready way to fetch a curse from heaven on thy self, is to imprecate one sinfully upon another, *Psal.* 109. 18. *As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him; as he cloathed himself with cursing like as with a garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and into his bones like oyl. Moses* I suppose had as noble a spirit as any of these that style them such men of honor, yet did he draw upon *Aaron*, or fall a cursing of *Miriam*, when they had used him so unworthily? I trow not, but bears all patiently, nay, when God declares his displeasure against *Miriam* for this affront put upon him, see how. 1.

how this holy man intercedes for her with God, *Numb.* 12. This is valor of the right make, to over-come evil with good, and instead of seeking revenge on him that wrongs us, to get the mastery of our own corruption so far as to desire his good the more. Thus our Lord, when he was numbred amongst transgressors, even then *interceded for the transgressors, Isa.* 53. 12. that is, those very men which used him so bloodily, while they were digging his heart out of his body with their instruments of cruelty, then was he begging the life of their souls with his fervent prayers.

2. Secondly, When thou prayest against the enemies of God and his Church, direct thy prayers rather against their plots than person. Thus the *Apostles*, *And now Lord, behold their threatnings*, *Act.* 4. 29. not, Confound their persons, but, Behold their threatnings, and so they leave their case with the Lord to right it for them. So *David*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 31. *O Lord, I pray thee turn the counsel of Ahitophel into foolishness.* Indeed God did do more, he destroyed plot and plotter also, and in this sense the Saints may oft say with the Prophet, *Thou hast done terrible things we looked not for*, and prayed not for, by pouring out his vengeance on the persons, when they have onely prayed against their wicked designes.

3. Thirdly, When praying against the persons of those that are open enemies to God and his Church, it is safest to pray indefinitly and in general; *Let them be confounded that hate Zion*, *Psal.* 129. because we know not who of them are implacable, and who not, and therefore cannot pray absolutely and peremptorily against particular persons. There may be an elect vessel for a time in open hostility against God and his Church, whom afterward God may consecrate to himself by converting grace, and so make him a holy vessel for the use of his Sanctuary. We do, 'tis confest, find some in Scripture prayed against by name, so *Moses* prayed against *Corah* and his complices, *Numb.* 16. and *Paul* against *Alexander* the Copper-smith, *The Lord reward him according to his works*; but these and other in Scripture had an extraordinary spirit, and not to be patterns for us in this case. *Elias* called for fire from heaven upon the Captains, but the disciples were soundly chid for a preposterous imitation of his act, who had not his spirit, *Luk.* 9. *Ye know not of what spirit ye are of.*

Pray

Pray thou for vengeance against all the implacable enemies of God, and leave him to direct thy arrow to its mark. *Ahab* was hit, though the arrow was shot at a venture by one that may be thought not of him. Prayers are sorted in heaven before their answer returns. Some of those *Emperors* for whom the Church in the primitive times prayed, yet proving implacable enemies to God and his people, felt the weight of those imprecations, which in general they put up against the adversaries of the truth.

Fourthly, In praying against the implacable enemies of God and his Church, the glory of God should be principally aimed at, and vengeance on them in order to that. *Arise, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered.* As the Sun when it hath dispelled the vapors that muffled it up from our sight, breaks out in the glory of its beams; so God, by taking vengeance on his enemies, and scattering them in their wicked imaginations, with which they endeavoured to obscure his glory in the world, doth display and make visible the splendor of his Attributes before his peoples eyes. The saddest consequence which attends the prosperity and success of Gods enemies in the world, is their pride and blasphemy against God, his Truth, and Church. Then they belch out their horrid blasphemies against heaven, then they mock the poor Saints, and pierce them with the sharp sword of their mocking language, while they say unto them, *Where is now their God?* But when God takes to himself power and strength, and confounds these gyants and sons of the earth, by tumbling destruction upon their heads in the midst of their wicked enterprizes, when he recoils their own plots they have charged against his Church upon themselves, making them go off like a pistol in their pocket, to procure their own death and ruine. Now the reproach is taken off, and they have an answer given home to their question, Where is now your God? He is at their throat, he is with his sword of vengeance vindicating his glorious Name upon them. When *Julian* the *Apostate* was slain (and confest at whose hand he received his fatal blow, in crying, *Vicisti Galilee*) then *Libanius* his scoffing Sophister had his question, *What is the Carpenters Son now a doing?* (which a little before he had put to a Christian in scorn of his Saviour) thrown in his teeth to the confusion of his face, and found the Christians answer (that *he was making a Coffin for his master*) prove truer than he was aware of. It cannot

but be a joyful day to a Saint, that prizeth the honor of his God above his own life, when he sees even the wicked (that before denied a Providence, and thought all events were thrown out of blind fortunes lap, as if the world were but a Lottery, wherein every one had his portion by chance, now forced, by the remarkable appearances of his power and wisdom, in saving his people, and destroying his implacable enemies, to confess, *Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth, Psal.* 58. 11. This exaltation of the glorious Name of God, every Saint doth and should aim at in the prayers wherein he imprecates vengeance, *Psal.* 83. 17. *Let them be confounded, let them be put to shame and perish; That men may know, that thou whose Name alone is* JEHOVAH *art the most high over all the earth.*

SECT. II.

1. NOw from this head of Imprecatory Prayer, there is First, Matter of comfort to the Saints against those direful imprecations which the wicked world belcheth out against them. The Saints in this sense are a cursed people. The wicked make the greatest part of the world, the Church is a little flock, but her enemies a huge herd; and these cannot wish well to the Saints. *Cain* (as *Luther* saith) will hate and kill *Abel* to the end of the world, the same spirit that was in him remaineth in his seed. Sometimes when the Church of God flourisheth, and hath the Sun of outward prosperity on her side, they may cry *Hosanna* in the crowd, (as *Shimei* when *David* was going up the hill of honor, then he could worship the rising Sun, and crouch to him whom he had bitterly cursed in his distress) *But when they bless with the mouth, they curse inwardly with their heart, Psal.* 65. 4. A wicked man cannot wish well to a Saint as a Saint; as on the contrary, a Saint cannot bless the wicked as such; *Psal.* 129. 8. *Neither do they which go by, say, The blessing of the Lord be upon you, we bless you in the name of the Lord.* They do indeed desire their conversion, and therein wish them well, but in the wicked way they are in at present they cannot bless them: So the wicked can desire the Saints would come over to their party, do as they do,

do, and then they would applaud and hug them: But let the Saints keep close to God, and refuse to run into riot and excess with them, and they are sure to meet with their curse and imprecation; it is not their unblamable and peaceable walking will free them from their wrath and fury. *Jer.* 15. 10. *I have neither lent to usury, nor have men lent to me on usury, yet every one of them doth curse me.* But fear not thou who art a Saint their imprecations, this is but *Anathema secundum dici*, like false fire in the pan of an uncharged gun, it gives a crack but hurts not; Gods blessing will cover thee from their curse, *Psal.* 109. 28. *Let them curse, but bless thou.* When the Viper flew out of the fire upon *Paul's* hand, the *Barbarians* look'd that he should presently drop down dead, but it proved no such matter. Thus the enemies of God and his people have look'd one generation after another, when the Church, that hath been always laden with their curses, should perish under them, but it lives yet to walk over the graves of all those that have wish'd it ill. Alas poor wretches! what is your imprecation worth? Truly as your blessing can do no good, so neither your curse any hurt, till you can get God to set his seal, and say Amen to it, which is impossible for you to obtain. Did our Saviour so sharply rebuke the rash request of his Disciples, calling for fire to fall on them, whom they thought deserved it? and will he gratifie the lust of your devillish wrath and fury against his own dear people, by pouring on them what you audaciously, yea, blasphemously, desire of him? Will nothing serve you but to have God your executioner to hang whom you condemn? and those no other than his dear children, and for nought else but because they dare not be as wicked as your selves? Go bid the tender mother imbrue her hands in the blood of her sweet babe, that even now came out of her womb, and now lies at her breast; or the husband betray and deliver the wife of his bosom into the hands of murderers, that wait for her life; would these be an errand to make the messenger that brings them welcom to loving mother or husband? But if any such anomilies in natures grammar, and monsters among men were to be found, yet remember he is a God thou solicitest, whose Nature is unchangable, and Covenant with his people inviolable. How was God courted by *Balak* and *Balaam* with altar after altar, from place to place? but all to no purpose; *Deut.* 23. 5. *Nevertheless the Lord thy God*

would not hearken to Balaam, but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee. Never was any design carri'd on with more zeal and passionate desire to effect it, than this; one would think that God had said enough to *Balaam* at first, to make him sick of his enterprize, as a thing infecable, *Numb.* 22. 12. *Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the people for they are blessed.* But he liked the work, and loved the wages, and therefore baffles his conscience, not telling the messengers all that God said to him, and they also report not all to *Balak* what *Balaam* said to them, so loth were both the work should fall: yet we see by the event, that they took but pains to lose their labour, nay worse, to lose themselves, for God made them, and him that set them on this work, to drink the curse, which they would so fain have brewed for *Israel.*

2. Secondly, A word to the wicked. Take heed that by your implacable hatred to the truth and Church of God, you do not engage her prayers against you. These imprecatory praiers of the Saints, when shot at the right mark, and duly put up, they are murdering pieces, and strike dead where they light. *Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you he will avenge them speedily, Luk.* 18. 7. 8. They are not empty words, (as the imprecations of the wicked, poured into the air, and there vanish with their breath, but are received into heaven, and shall be sent back with thunder and lightning upon the pates of the wicked. *Davids* prayer unravell'd *Ahitophels* fine spun policy, and twisted his halter for him. The prayers of the Saints are more to be feared (as once a great person said and felt) than an Army of twenty thousand men in the field. *Esther's* fast hastned *Haman's* ruine, and *Hezekiah's* against *Zenacherib* brought his huge host to the slaughter, and fetcht an Angel from heaven to do the execution in one night upon them.

CHAP.

CHAP. LVI.

Of Gratulatory Prayer, what is to be the subject of our Thanksgiving.

THe second kind of prayer in this last division is Thanksgiving, in handling whereof I shall still keep my former method. First, Shew what are to return praises and thanks to God for: Secondly, How we are to frame our thanksgivings we return.

First, What we are to praise and thank God for. Now the object of *thanksgiving* (as of requests) is something that is good, but under another notion; we ask what we want, we bless and praise God for the mercies we have received, or for the hope we have from the promise that we shall in due time receive them. So that we see the Christian hath as large a field for the exercise of his thankfulness in praising God, as he hath in the petitionary part of prayer for his desires. This duty circumscribes heaven and earth, it takes both worlds within its circumference. As God does nothing but he aims at his own glory thereby, *Prov.* 16. 4. so no act of God towards his people, wherein he intends not their good, and as such becomes the subject of their thanksgiving. Hence we are bid, *In every thing give thanks.* O what a copious theam hath God given his people to enlarge their meditations upon! *In every thing.* The whole course and series of divine providence towards the Saints is like a Musick-book, in every leaf whereof there is a Song ready prick'd for them, to learn and sing to the praise of their God, no passage in their life of which they can say, In this I received no mercy for which I should bless God. Now as a partial obedience is no good, so partial thanks is stark naught; not that any Saint is able to keep all the commands, or reckon up all the mercies of God, much less return particular and expres-

expreſs acknowledgment for every ſingle mercy; but as he hath reſpect to all the commandments, *Pſal.* 119. 6. ſo he deſires to value highly every mercy, and to his utmoſt power give God the praiſe of all his mercies, *Pſal.* 116. *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* This is an honeſt ſoul indeed, he would not ſink any debt he ows to God, but calls his ſoul to an account for all his benefits, not this or that. The skipping over one note in a Leſſon may ſpoil the grace of the Muſick, unthankfulneſs for one mercy diſparageth our thanks for the reſt. But to ſort the mercies of God into ſeveral ranks, that you may ſee more diſtinctly your work in this duty lie before you.

1. Firſt, Mercies are either ordinary or extraordinary; our every-day commons or exceedings, with which God now and then feaſts us. Thou muſt not onely praiſe God for ſome extraordinary mercy, which once in a year betides thee, a mercy that comes with ſuch pomp and obſervation, that all thy neighbours take notice of it with thee; as the mercy which *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* had in their ſon, that *was noiſed about all the Country*, *Luk.* 1. 65. but alſo for ordinary, every-day mercies; for *firſt*, we are unworthy of the leaſt mercy, *Gen.* 32. 10. and therefore God is worthy of praiſe for the leaſt, becauſe it is more than he ows us. *Secondly*, Theſe common ordinary mercies are many. Thus *David* enhanceth the mercies of this kind, *O God, how great is the ſum of them? if I ſhould count them, they are more in number than the ſand; when I wake I am ſtill with thee*, *Pſal.* 139. 18. as if he had ſaid, There is not a point of time wherein thou art not doing me good; as ſoon as I open my eyes in the morning, I have a new theam in ſome freſh mercies given in ſince I cloſed them over night to employ my praiſful meditations. Many little items make together a great ſum. What leſs than a grain of ſand, yet what heavier than the ſand on the Sea-ſhore? As little ſins, ſuch as are vain thoughts and idle words, becauſe of their multitude, ariſe to a great guilt, and will bring in a long bill, a heavy reckoning at laſt; ſo ordinary mercies, what they want in their ſize (particularly and individually conſidered) of ſome other greater mercies, they have it compenſated in their number. Who will not ſay that a man ſhews as great, yea, greater kindneſs, to maintain one at his table with ordinary fare all the year, as in entertaining him at a great feaſt twice or thrice in the ſame time? *Thirdly*,

The

The sincerity of the heart is seen more in thankfulness for ordinary mercies than extraordinary. As it shews a naughty heart upon every ordinary occasion to fall into a sin, so the soul very gracious that takes the hint of every common mercy to bless his God. Some they are so bound up in their spirits, that none but strong physick will work upon them; they can digest little afflictions, and swallow ordinary mercies, without humbling themselves under the one, or praising God for the other. That is the upright heart which gentle physick prevails with, little chastisements humble, and ordinary mercies raise to thankfulness.

Secondly, Mercies are compleat, or imperfect; begun mercies, or finished. We must not make God stay for our praises till he hath finished a mercy, but praise him at the beginning of a mercy; we should be as ready to return our praises for a mercy, as God is to hear our prayers when begging a mercy. Now God comes forth early to meet a praying soul, *At the beginning of thy supplication the commandment came forth*, Dan. 9. 23. *I said I would confess my transgression, and thou forgavest*, Psal. 32. Thus should we eccho in our thankfulness to the first intimation, that God gives in his providence of an approaching mercy. If you do but hear the King is on the Road toward your Town, you raise your bells to ring him in, and stay not till he be entred the gates. The birds they rise betimes in the morning, and are saluting the rising-Sun with their sweet notes in the air. Thus should we strike up our Harps in praising God at the first appearance of a mercy. Notable instances we have for this, *Moses* did not promise God, when he had saved them from *Pharaoh*'s wrath, and the seas waves, that at his landing them safe in *Canaan*, and lodging his victorious colours at the end of their journey in their full rest, then he would praise him for all his mercies together; no, but he presently pens a Song, and on the bank, within sight of the houling wilderness, which they were now to enter into, he sings it with *Israel* in thankfulness for this first hansel after their march out of *Egypt*. So, 2 *Sam.* 6. 12, 13. *And it was so, that when they that bare the Ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.* And 1 *Chron.* 15. 26. which is a place parallel to this, and speaks of the same passage, *When God helped the Levites that bare the Ark, they offered seven bullocks and seven rams*; that is, So soon as by going a few paces or steps, they perceived God graciously 2.

graciously to favour their enterprize, (making no breach as formerly he had done upon them) they presently express their thankfulness upon the place, for this hopeful beginning, well knowing no way was better to engage God in the continuance and enlargement of his mercy, than by a praisful entertainment thereof at its first approach: In a word, Thus the *Jews* in *Babylon*, at the very first peep of day, when their deliverance began to break out, are at their praises, *Psal.* 126. 2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the Heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.* It was now but coming-tyde (as I may say) with them, the water was newly turn'd, and their affairs began to look with a more smiling face; yet now they salute their infant mercy with joy and thankfulness. May be, Christian, thou art upon a sick-bed, and some little reviving thou hast, though far from thy former health; O bless God for this little lift of thy head from thy pillow. May be thou hast been, as to thy spiritual state, in great distresse, (as it were in the belly of hell) swallowed up with terrors from the Lord, but now thy agony abates, though the Comforter be not come, yet thou hast some strictures of divine light let into thy dungeon, that raise a little hope to wait for more; O let not this hansel of mercy passe without some thankful acknowledgment. Some also are like great ships, that cannot be set afloat but with the spring-tide and high-water of a mercy compleated; if they have not all they would, they cannot see what they have, nor tune their hearts into a praiseful frame.

3. Thirdly, Mercies are such as are received in this life, or reserved for the next; mercies in hand, or mercies in hope. There are promises which God will have us stay till we come to heaven for the performance of: and these we are to praise God for as well as what we receive here; blesse God for what he hath laid up for thee in heaven, as well as that he lays out upon thee on earth. The more our hearts are enlarged in thankfulnesse for these mercies, which we now have onely in hope, the more honor we put upon his faithful promise. He that bestows much cost upon a house he hath in reversion, shews his confidence is great one day to be possessed of it. When a Bill of Exchange is paid at sight, it shews the Merchant whose it is, to be a man of credit and ability. By the joy thou takest up, and the thankfulnesse thou layest out

for

for what the bare promiſe tells thee thou ſhalt at death receive, thou glorifieſt the truth of God that is the promiſer.

Fourthly, There are bitter mercies and ſweet mercies; ſome mercies God gives in wine, ſome in wormwood: Now we muſt praiſe God for the bitter mercies as well as the ſweet; thus *Job, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* Too many are prone to think, nothing is a mercy that is not ſweet in the going down, and leaves not a pleaſant farewel on their palat; but this is the childiſhneſs of our ſpirits, which as grace grows more manly, and the Chriſtian more judicious, will wear off. Who, that underſtands himſelf, will value a book by the gilt on the cover? Truly none of our temporals (whether croſſes or enjoyments) conſidered in themſelves abſtractly, are either a curſe or mercy; they are onely as the covering to the book, it is what is writ in them that muſt reſolve us whether they be a mercy or not. Is it an affliction that lies on thee? if thou canſt find it comes from love, and ends in grace and holineſſe, it is a mercy though it be bitter to thy taſte. Is it an enjoyment? if love doth not ſend it, and grace end it, (which appears when thou groweſt worſe by it) it is a curſe though ſweet to thy ſenſe. There are ſweet poiſons as well as bitter cordials. The Saints commonly have greater advantage from their afflictions in the world, than enjoyments of the world; their eyes are oftner enlightned with wormwood than hony; thoſe diſpenſations that are bitter and unpleaſing to ſenſe, than thoſe that are ſweet and luſcious. 4.

Fifthly, Mercies are either perſonal, or ſuch as we receive in partnerſhip with others, and theſe muſt be recognized as well as the other. *Pardon, O God,* (ſaid He) *my other mens ſins.* Thus, *Bleſſed be God* (ſay Thou) *for my other mens mercies.* Haply, Chriſtian, thou haſt prayed for a ſick friend, and he is reſtored to health; for another in diſtreſſe of ſpirit, and the Comforter at laſt is come to him. Now thou who hadſt an adventure in his Bottom, haſt a mercy alſo in the return that is made to him, and therefore art to bleſſe God with him. He that prays for his friend, and joyns not with him in thankfulneſs when the mercy is given, is like one that is a means to bring his friend into debt, but takes no care to help him out. Thy friend (Chriſtian) needs thy aid much more to pay the thanks, than to borrow the mercy, 5.

because this is the harder work of the two. But above all mercies to others, be sure Church-mercies and Nation-mercies be not forgot.

CHAP. LVII.

Four Directions how to frame our Thanksgivings.

YOU have heard what is the subject of our praises and thanksgivings. We come now to the second thing promised, to lay down some rules how we are to frame our thanksgivings.

SECT. I.

1. FIrst, Be sure the thing thou praisest God for be found among the good things of the promise, that is the compass by which we are to steer our course; as in the Petitionary, so also in the Gratulatory part of prayer, if it be not in the Promise it is not a mercy, and so not the subject of thanksgiving. When some prosper in their wickedness, they are so bold as to thank God they sped so well. Now if it be a grievous sin for a man to bless himself in any wicked way, *Deut.* 29. 19. much more horrid is it to blesse God for prospering therein; by the former he onely voucheth his own sin, (which indeed is bad enough) but by the other he makes God a party with him, and tempts the Lord to own it also. 'Tis a good speech of *Bernard* to this purpose, who comparing those that on the one hand thank God for their success in wickedness, with hypocrites, who praise him for the good things they receive, saith, *Isti impie mala suo Deo, isti Dei bona fraudulenter intorquent sibi, Serm.* 45. *super Cant.* The one impute their sin to God, the other ascribe the glory of his mercies

to

to themselves. God cannot accept thy praise, unless he first approve thy fact. He that receives a bribe is guilty of the fault. And dare you thus tempt the holy One? If the God you serve were like the Heathens Idols, the matter were not much. When the *Philistims* had practised their cruelty on *Saul*, they present his head to their god. The devil desires no better sacrifices than the fruit of mens sins. But the holy One of *Israel* abhors all wicked praises, *The hire of a Whore was not to be offered*, *Deut.* 23. 18.

Secondly, Let all your praises be offered up in Christ, *Heb.* 13. 15. *By him let us offer the sacrifice of praise unto God.* 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. *Ye are an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* Couldst thou pen never so rare a Panegyrick, couldst thou flourish it with never so much art or rhetorick, and deliver it with the greatest passion and zeal possible, all this would be harsh, and grate the Almighty's ear, except founded through Christ. 'Tis not the breath poured into the open air, but passing through the Trumpet or some other Instrument (where it is formed into a tunable sound) that makes it pleasing Musick. Possibly when thou prayest for a mercy, thou sheltrest thy self under Christs wing, and usest his Name to procure thy admission (because conscious of thine own unworthiness to receive what thou askest) but when thou praisest God, thy errand being not to beg and receive, but to give, thou expectest welcom: He that brings a present shall surely find the dore open; Yes, if thy gift were suitable to the great God: But who art thou that the great God should take a present at thy hand? If thou beest not worthy of the least mercy thou beggest, then surely thou art unworthy of this honor to have thy thank-offering accepted. Thou needest Christs mediation for the one as much as for the other. 2.

Thirdly, Stay not in generals, but descend to the particular instances of Gods mercy towards thee in thy thanksgivings. *Est dolus in generalibus.* It bewrays a sleighty spirit (if not a false) when in confession of sin we content our selves with a general inditement, I am a sinner, a great sinner, and there to stop without a particular sense of the several breaches made in the Law of God. Neither is it here a better symptom, when a man puts God off with a complement at distance for his goodness and mercy in 3.

general, but takes no notice of the particular *Items* which swell and make up the total sum. Now to be able to do this, it will be necessary that thou takest special notice of Gods daily providence to thee and thine, yea, and to the Church of Christ also, lay up these in thy heart (as *Mary* did our Saviours words) for matter of thanksgiving against the time of prayer; this is true good husbandry for thy soul. You do not expect to find that mony in your chest, which you never laid up there, neither will you readily find in your heart to praise God for those mercies, which you never committed to your memory. 'Tis to be feared, the man means not to pay that debt honestly, which he doth not set down in his book. *Psal.* 107. when the *Psalmist* there had stirred them up to thankfulness for the mercies of God in creation and providence, his conclusion is worthy of remark, *Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord*; as if he had said, The reason why so little praise is given for such great works of mercy, is, because men see not the loving kindness of God in them; and they see not this, because they observe not those; and they observe not those, because they have not wisdom. 'Tis not a Library makes a Schollar, but wisdom to observe and gather the choice notions out of his books. None want mercies to bless God for, Divine Providence is a large volume, writ thick and close with mercies from one end of our life to the other; but few alas have a heart to read in it, and fewer have wisdom to collect the choice passages of it for such a holy purpose as this is.

Sect. II.

4. Fourthly, Excite thy praising graces. *David* stirs up all that is within him to praise God, *Psal.* 103. that is, all the powers and graces of his soul. To instance but in two or three.

1. First, Humility; a proud man cannot well tell how to beg, yet selvishness may make him stoop to it; but in thankfulness he must needs be a bungler, for this is a high piece of self-denial. *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy Name be the praise.* The proud mans gift will cleave to to his hand, he is unfit to set the Crown

Crown on Gods head that hath a mind to wear it himself. We find indeed the tool in the *Pharisees* hand, but he cuts his work into chips; he seems to honor God with his mouth, but eats his words as he speaks them, and discovers plainly, that he intends more to exalt himself than God; *I thank God I am not as this Publican.* This, I thank God, comes in *pro formâ*; 'tis the *Publican* that he disdains, and himself that he applauds. You may easily think what a look ambitious *Haman* gave *Mordecai*, when he held his stirrup, who desired himself to have been in the saddle. How alas can a proud heart give God that, which he covets himself? No man, saith *Luther*, can pray *sanctificetur nomen tuum*, till he first be able to pray, *profanetur nomen meum*, *Sanctified be thy Name*, till he be willing his *own name should be debased.* Labour therefore to villifie, nullifie thy self, then, and not till then, thou wilt magnifie, omnifie thy God. None so zealous in begging, as he that is most pinched with his want; none so hearty in his thanks, as he that hath most sense of his unworthinesse; and who can think better of himself, that is throughly acquainted with himself? If God had not set thee up, what stock couldst thou have found of thy own? Thou wert as bare as a shorn sheep, naked camest thou into the world, and ever since thou hast been cast upon thy God, even as a poor child upon the charge of the parish; what hast thou earned by all the service thou hast done him? not the bread of thy poorest meal. And art thou yet proud? *Bernard* compares *Josephs* carriage with his Master, and the grateful souls with God, thus together; *Joseph* (saith the Father) knew that his Master, who put all he had into his hands, yet excepted his wife, and therefore accounted it too base an ingratitude to take her from his Masters bed, who had been so kind to him in his house. Thus, saith he, God freely gives his mercies into the Saints hands, but exceprs his glory; therefore the gracious soul takes what God gives thankfully, but leaves the praise of them, which God reserves for himself, humbly.

Secondly, Love and Joy. *Amor & gaudium faciunt musicum*, Love and joy ('tis said) make a musician. Indeed then this musick of praise is best (in heaven I mean) where these graces are perfect. *First Love*, This is an affection that cannot keep within dore, but must be sallying forth in the praises of God. *Austin*, speaking of heaven, breaks out thus, *Ibi vacabimus & videbimus*, *videbimus*, 2.

vibebimus & amabimus, amabimus & laudabimus, laudabimus & cantabimus. In heaven we shall have nothing to do but to behold the face of God, and seeing him we shall love him, loving him we shall praise him, and praising we shall sing and rejoyce. Love and thankfulnesse are like the symbolical qualities of the elements, easily resolved into each other. *Psal.* 116. 1. *David* begins with, *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice*; and to enkindle this grace into a greater flame, he aggravates the mercies of God in some following *verses*, which done, then he is in the right cue for praises, and strikes up his instrument, *vers.* 11. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?* The *Spouse*, when once she was throughly awake, pondering with her self what a friend had been at her door, and how his sweet company was lost through her unkindnesse, shakes off her sloth, riseth, and away she goes after him; now when with running after her beloved, she had put her soul into a heat of love, then she breaks out into an *Encomium* of her Beloved, praising him from top to toe, *Cant.* 5. 10. That is the acceptable praising which comes from a warm heart, and he that would warm his heart, must use some holy exercise to stir up his habit of love, which like natural heat in the body, is preserved and encreased by motion.

Secondly, Excite thy *Joy*, *Psal.* 63. 5. *I will sing with joyful lips.* A sad heart and a thankful hardly can dwell together, I mean, sad with worldly sorrow. The *Disciples* for sorrow could not hold open their eyes to pray, much more sure were they unfit to praise; this indeed makes the duty of praise and thanksgiving more difficult than to pray, because our joy here is so often quenched and interrupted with intervening sins and sorrows, that this heavenly fire seldom burns long clear on the Christians altar, from which his praises should ascend. Temptations and afflictions, they both drive the soul to prayer, and more dispose it for prayer; but they untune his instrument for praise. *Hannah* she wept and prayed, but durst not eat of the Peace-offering, the sacrifice of praise, because she wept. It behoves us therefore the more to watch our hearts, lest they be indisposed by any affliction for this duty. Do with thy soul as the Musician in wet weather doth with his instrument, which he hangs not in a moist nasty room, but where it may have the air of the fire. Art thou under affliction, let not thy soul pore too long on those thy troubles,

troubles, but bring it within the ſcent of Gods mercies that are intermingled with them. Sit near this fire of Gods love in Chriſt, warm thy heart with meditation on ſpiritual promiſes, while thou art under bodily preſſures, and thou ſhalt find through Gods bleſſing thy heart in ſome comfortable tune to praiſe God, in the ſaddeſt and moſt rainy day that can befall thee in all thy life. Thus *David* could make muſick in the Cave, *Pſal.* 57. 7. *My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed, O God, I will ſing and give praiſe.*

CHAP. LVIII.

Four more Rules to be obſerved in the duty of thankſgiving.

Ifthly, content not thy ſelf with a bare narrative, but give every mercy its proper accent, according to the enhancing circumſtances thereof. There is great difference in two that ſing the ſame ſong, from one you have onely the plain ſong, the other diſcants and runs diviſion upon it, in which conſiſts the grace of the Muſick. The mercies of God affect our hearts, as they are dreſſed forth, if we put on them their rich habiliments, the circumſtances I mean that advance them, they appear glorious to our eyes, and enlarge our hearts in praiſes for them; but conſidered without theſe, we paſs them ſlightly. God himſelf, when he would expreſſe the heighth of his love to his people, preſents them to his own eye, not as now they are, but as cloathed with the glory he intends them. *Iſa.* 52. 6. *As the bride-groom rejoyces over the bride, ſo ſhall the Lord rejoyce over thee.* At the wedding-day, the beſt cloathes are put on. Thus do thou, to draw out thy thankfulneſſe for mercies, conſider them in thoſe circumſtances that may render them moſt glorious in thine eye. Some *Emperors* have not ſuffered every one

one to draw their picture, leſt they ſhould be disfigured by their bungling penſil. Truly ſlighty praiſes disfigure the lovely face of Gods mercy, they are but few that draw them to life; to do this, much ſtudy and meditation are requiſite. *The works of the Lord are ſought out of them that have pleaſure in them.* The curious Limner ſtudies the face of the man before he makes his draught. Praiſe is a work not done in a trice; the Leſſon muſt be pricked before it can be ſung; read therefore the Word, and learn from the Saints there recorded what aggravating circumſtances they have obſerved in recognizing their mercies; ſometimes we have them ſetting the accent upon the ſpeedy return of their praiers, *In the day that I cried thou anſweredſt me*, *Pſal.* 128. this is a print that ſuperads a further excellency to the mercy; it was but knock, and have; come, and be ſerved. While the Church were at Gods dore praying for *Peters* deliverance, *Peter* is knocking at theirs to tell them their prayer is heard. Sometimes from the ſinful infirmities which mingled with their prayers; now that mercy ſhould come with a notwithſtanding theſe, and ſteal upon them when they had hardly faith to wait for them, this hath exceedingly endeared the goodneſs of God to them. *I ſaid in mine haſte, all men are liars. What ſhall I return unto the Lord for all his benefits? Pſal.* 116. Sometime from the greatneſſe of their ſtraight, *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and ſaved him out of all his troubles. Oh taſte and ſee how good the Lord is*, *Pſal.* 34. So, *Pſal.* 136. *Who remembred us in our low eſtate, for his mercy endureth for ever.* Indeed this muſt needs raiſe high appreciating thoughts of the mercy. The water that God gave *Iſrael* out of the rock is called Hony, becauſe it came in their extream want, and ſo was as ſweet to them as hony. Silver is gold when given to a poor man that muſt elſe have died for lack of bread. *Sometimes* from the frequent returns of Gods goodneſs, and expreſſions of his care; *Thy mercies are new every morning. Lam.* 13. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up, yet have they not prevailed, Pſal.* 121. *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us*, 1 *Sam* 7. 12. This gives ſuch an accent, as without it the mercy cannot be pronounced with its due emphaſis. A courſe of ſin is worſe than an act of ſin, *Jer.* 23. 10. *Their courſe is evil.* So courſe of mercy from time to time, ſpeaks more love. Some that could beteem a ſingle alms on a beggar, would beat him from

their

their door, should he lie often there, and make it a trade. *Sometimes* from the peculiarity of the mercy, they take notice of the distinction God makes in issuing out of his favours, *Psal.* 147. 20. *He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his judgments they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord. Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thy self to us, and not to the world? Joh.* 14. 22. Let these few hints suffice to set thee on work to find out the other; without this, we rob God of the best part of our sacrifice, as if a *Jew* had stript off the fat, and laid the lean on Gods altar; or as he did by his Idol, who took off the cloak of silver it had, and put on his own thread-bare one in the room of it. The mercies thou receivest are great and rich, give not him thy beggarly praises? He expects they should bear some proportion to his mercy, *Praise him for his mighty acts, praise him according to his excellent greatness, Psal.* 150. 2.

Sect. I.

6. SIxthly, Distinguish between mercy and mercy, let the choicest mercies have thy highest praises. It shews a noughty heart to houl and make a great noise in prayer for corn and wine, and in the mean time to be indifferent or faint in his desires for Christ and his grace; nor better is it, when one acknowledges the goodness of God in temporals, but takes little notice of those greater blessings which concern another life. You shall have sometimes a covetous Earth-worm speak what a blessed time and season it is for the corn and the fruits of the earth, (these fit his carnal palate, as the pottage did *Esaus*) but you never hear him express any feeling sense of the blessed seasons of grace, the miracle of Gods patience, that such a wretch as he is out of hell so long, the infinite love of God in offering Christ by the Gospel to him; he turns over these as a child doth a book, till he hits on some gaud and picture, and there he stays to gaze. Christ and his grace, with other spiritual blessings he skills not of, he cares not for, except they would fill his bags and barns. Now, shall such a one passe for a thankful man? will God accept his praises for earth, that rejects heaven? that takes corn and wine with thanks, and bids him keep Christ to himself with scorn? saying as *Esau*, when his

brother offered him his present, *I have enough*? A gracious heart is of another strain, *Ephes.* 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places by Christ.* Indeed God gives temporals to make us in love with spirituals, yea, with himself that gives them; as the Suiter sends the token to gain the love of the person. *Again*, As we are to distinguish between mercy and mercy, so even in these lower mercies that concern this life, be sure thou layest the accent of thy thankfulness on the spiritual part of them. In every outward mercy, there is food for the flesh, and food for the spirit; that which pleaseth the sense, and that which may exercise our grace. Is it health? the carnal heart is taken most with it, as it brings the joy of his natural life to him, which sickness deprived him of. But that which above all pleaseth a Saint, is the opportunity that comes with it for his glorifying God in his place and generation; *Psal.* 42. 11. *I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God.* Is it an estate that God casts in? the carnal wretch values it for his private accommodation, as if it were given for no higher end than to spend it upon himself, or enrich his family. But the gracious blesseth God that gives him to give to the necessity of others, and counts a large heart to be a greater mercy than a full purse. *David* did not bless himself in his abundance, but bless God that gave him a heart to refund it again into the bosom of God, from whom he received it; 1 *Chron.* 29. 14. *But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?*

7. Seventhly, Let not thy praises be transient, a fit of Musick, and then the Instrument hung by the wall, till another gaudy day of some remarkable providence makes thee take it down. God will not sit at such a niggards table, who invites him to a Thanksgiving-feast once for all the year. God comes not guest-wise to his Saints house, but to dwell with them, *He inhabits the praises of his people, Psal.* 22. 3. That day thou blessest not God, thou turnst him out of doors. *David* took this up for a life-work, *As long as I live will I praise thee. A lying tongue is but for a moment*, saith *Solomon, Prov.* 12. 19. Something drops from a liar within a while that discovers his falshood; the tongue that lies in praising of God, is thus for a moment; he can curse God with that tongue to morrow with which he praiseth him to day.

SECT

Sect. II.

EIghthly, Thou must not onely continue, but grow in thy praises; as the tide encreaseth, the ship is lift higher on the waters; as your crop encreaseth, your barns are enlarged; as you grow richer, you advance in your garb and port; in a word, as your bodies grow, so you make your cloathes bigger. Every day swells the tide of your mercies, adds to your heap, encreases your treasure, and heightens your stature; *They are new* (saith the *Prophet*) *every morning*, *Lam.* 3. 23. they grow whether thou sleepest or wakest. Now as the coat thou didst wear, when thou wert a child, would not become thee now thou art a man; so neither will the garment of praise, which thou didst cloathe thy soul with when a young convert, become thee now thou art an old disciple; thou standest deeper in Gods books than before, and God expects according to what every man hath received. Your selves are not so bad husbands, but you would improve your estates to the heighth; Would you let a Farm now by the rate it bare forty or fifty years ago? why then may not God raise the rent of his mercies also? Look back, Christian, and see how well the world is mended with thee since thou didst first set up; may be thou canst say with *Jacob*, *I passed over with my staff, and behold now I am become two bands.* Well, see what thou hast more, in health, estate, in gifts, graces or comforts than thou hadst formerly, and then compare thy present thankfulnesse with what it was before these additions were made to thy stock and treasure; would it not be a shame to thee, if it should be found not to have grown, as the goodness of God to thee hath done, much more if it hath shrunk and grown less? And yet how common are such instances of ingratitude? The freer God is of his mercy, the more close and gripple they are in their thankful returns; when poor, they could be thankful for a short meal of coorse fare, more than they are now for their varieties and dainties. When sick, a few broken sleeps that amounted to an hour or two rest in a night, O how affected were their hearts for this mercy? whereas now they can rise and take little notice of the goodness of God, that 2.

gives them their full rest night after night without interruption. Thus as the days lengthen, so the cold strengthens: But is it not strange to see a man grow colder in his love to God, as the Sun of Gods mercy riseth higher, and shines hotter upon him? O 'tis sad to see the heap encrease, and the heart waste; to find a man grow richer in mercy, and poorer in thankfulnesse.

CHAP. LIX.

The two last Directions concerning the Duty of thanksgiving.

9. NInthly, Let thy praises be real. Words we say pay no debts. There goes more to thankfulnesse than a mouthful of windy praises, which passe away with the sound they make. A gracious heart is too wise to think God will be put off with a song, he will give God that, but it is the least he intends. *The Lord is my strength and song, and I will prepare him an habitation, Exod.* 15. 2. Ay, here it sticks, building is chargeable; thankfulnesse is a costly work: *Shall I offer to God that which cost me nothing?* saith *David* to *Araunah*. Cheap praises are easily obtained, but when it comes to charges, then many grow sick of the work. The *Jews* could *sing a song* when delivered from *Babylon*, *Psal.* 121. but it was long before they could find in their hearts *to build God an habitation*, the time was not come for that; they might have said, their heart was not come; they had mony and time enough to build their own nests, but none for God, though herein they plaied the fools egregiously, for as fast as they built at one end, God pulled down at the other. Some have been of their mind in our times, in stead of finding God a habitation, and loving our Nation to build Synagogues, they have pulled them down, and carried the beams to their

their own houſes. Excellent Artiſts, in taking down Miniſters, Miniſtry, and their maintenance, whereby the Goſpel ſhould be upheld! If this be the way to thrive, God gave his people but ill counſel, when he ſaid, *Conſider now from this day I will bleſs you*, *Hag.* 3. But you will ask what I mean by real praiſes?

SECT. I.

FIrſt then, our praiſes are real when they are cordial: *All that is within me bleſſe his holy Name*, *Pſal.* 103. When his mercies beget amiable, high, and honourable thoughts of God in our hearts. We read of *curſing God in the heart*, *Pſal.* 106. 1. which then is done, when we have baſe, low, unbecoming thoughts of his greatneſs and goodneſs; and on the contrary, when the mercies of God imprint ſuch an image in the heart of him, as livelily repreſents theſe his attributes, then thou bleſſeſt God in thy heart, by adoring his Majeſty, reverencing his Holineſs, delighting in his Love, and fearing his Goodneſs; here is real thankfulneſs. What is *laus* or *honor*, but a reflection of the perſons excellency we commend? Now as the glaſs repreſents the image of the perſon that looks on it, ſo the thankful ſoul reflects thoſe glorious Attributes again upon God, which he puts forth in his mercies. Thus God ſees his face in a true glaſſe, which the thankful ſoul holds up while he praiſeth him. Whereas an unthankful heart, like a broken glaſſe, diſtorts and disfigures the beautiful face of God, by conceiving ſuch low thoughts of God, as are unworthy of his glorious Attributes. 1.

Secondly, When our praiſes are obediential. God accounts thoſe mercies forgotten which are not written with legible characters in our lives. *Pſal.* 106. 21. *They forgat God their Saviour.* That of *Joſhua* is obſervable, *chap.* 8. 32. upon their victory over the City *Ai*, an altar is built as a monument of that ſignal mercy; now mark, what doth God command to be writ or engraved on the ſtones thereof? One would have thought the hiſtory of that days work ſhould have been the Sculpture, but *it is the copy of the Law of Moſes, which he wrote in the preſence of the children of Iſrael*, *verſ.* 32. whereby he plainly ſhewed, the beſt way of remembring the mercy, was, not to forget to keep 2.

keep the Law. *Saul* could not blind *Samuels* eyes with his many good-morrows, that the people saved the best of the cattel for sacrifice; *Hath the Lord* (saith he) *as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying his voice? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to obey than the fat of Lambs*, 1 *Sam.* 15. 22. as if he had said, What, *Saul*, thinkest thou to bribe God with a sacrifice, while thou art disobedient to his command? dost thou take the Swan, and stick the feather in the room? deny him thine own heart to obey his word, and give him a beasts heart in sacrifice for it? Is this the oblation which he hath required, or will accept? Truly God riseth hungry from our Thanksgiving-dinners, if obedience be not a dish at the table; without this, we and our sacrifices may burn together. God will pluck such from the horns of the Altar, and take them off their knees with their hypocritical praises, to pay his debt in another kind. *If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land*, *Isa.* 1. 19. Then, and not till then, will God eat of your sacrifices, and your selves taste the sweetness of your enjoyments. *He meets him that rejoyceth and worketh righteousnesse*, *Isa.* 64. 5. Not either apart, but both together are required; not rejoyce without working righteousnes, nor that without rejoycing in the work. The threatning, *Deut.* 28. is levelled against *Israel*, not barely because they served not God, but because *they served him not with gladnesse in the abundance of his mercies.* God delights to have his mercy seen in the cheerful countenance of his servants, while they are at his work, which may tell the spectators they serve a good Master.

SECT. II.

3. THirdly, Then they are real praises when they end in acts of mercy. Very observable is that place; *Hebr.* 13. 15. *By him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his Name.* Now mark the very next words, *But to do good and communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* As if he had said, Think not you may thank God to save charges, be willing to both or neither. Gods goodnes to us should make us merciful to others. 'Twere strange

ſtrange indeed a ſoul ſhould come out of his tender boſom with a hard uncharitable heart. Some children do not indeed take after their earthly parents, as *Cicero*'s ſon, that had nothing of his father but his name; but Gods children partake all of their heavenly Fathers nature. *Philoſophy* tells us, that there is *no re-action* from the earth to the heavens, they indeed ſhed their influences upon the lower world, which quicken and fructifie it, but the earth returns none back to make the Sun and Stars ſhine the better. *David* knew very well, that *his goodneſſe extended not unto God*, but this made him reach it forth to his brethren, *to the Saints which are on the earth*, *Pſal.* 16. 2. Indeed God hath left his poor Saints to receive his Rents we owe unto him for his mercies. An ingenuous gueſt, though his friend will take nothing for his entertainment, yet to ſhew his thankfulneſſe will give ſomething to his ſervants. At Chriſt his return, how doth he ſalute his Saints? *Matth.* 25. not, *Come ye bleſſed*, ye have kept ſuch a thankſgiving-day, and filled the air with your ſongs of praiſe; but, *When I was an hungry ye fed me, when naked ye cloathed me.* Alms-deeds in Saint *Pauls* language are called fruit, *When I have performed this, and ſealed to them this fruit*, *Rom.* 15. 28. implying, that all our profeſſion without theſe good works are but leaves: this is the ſolid fruit of our faith, love to God, and thankfulneſſe for his mercies. Neither muſt theſe acts of charity be reſtrained to the mony in thy purſe, or bread in thy cupboard, though theſe are included, there are poor ſouls as well as poor bodies, that need relief. Hath God plucked thee out of *Sodom*, out of Satans bondage? where are then thy bowels of compaſſion to thoſe, who are yet chained to the devils poſt? what means doſt thou uſe to redeem theſe captives out of their worſe than Turkiſh ſlavery? The argument God urgeth to *Iſrael* to uſe ſtrangers kindly, is to remember they were once ſo, *Deut.* 23. 7 Haſt thou, after long lying in the dungeon of ſpiritual darkneſſe and troubles of conſcience, had thy head lift up with the comforts of the Spirit, received into the preſence of God as *Pharaoh's* Butler was to his Princes Court? how canſt thou think thy ſelf thankful, while thou forgetteſt others that lie in the ſame priſon-houſe, under as ſad fears and terrors as once thy ſelf did? *Unto the upright there ariſeth light out of darkneſs, he is gracious and full of compaſſion*, *Pſal.* 112. 4. Surely this will hold, if in any, then in this caſe. In a word,

that

that I may not be thought to make you hard to the outward man, while I stir up your charity to the inward, Hath God raised thee to an estate? (may be thy pilgrims staff with *Jacob's* is turned to two troops) dost thou now shew the kindnesse of God to his poor members? as *David*, who enquired if there were none of the house of *Saul*. Oh how unlike are we to the Saints of primitive times! they would run to meet an object for their charity, and we run from them; they considered the poor what they wanted, how they might relieve them, yea, they *devised liberal things*; but we consider and contrive how we may save our purse best; they were willing to part with all in case of extremity, while we grudge a little from our superfluity, laying that by pride on our backs, which should cover the poors; throw that to our hauks and hounds, which should refresh the bowells of the poor; yea, spend more in one drunken meeting, a misers feast, or a wrangling sute at Law, than we can be willing to give in a year to the necessitous members of Christ.

Sect. III.

4. FOurthly, When it produceth a stronger confidence on God for the future. Who will say that man is thankfull to his friend for a past kindnes, that nourishes an ill opinion of him for the future, and dares not trust him when he needs him again? this was all that ingrateful *Israel* returned to God, for his miraculous broaching the Rock to quench their thirst, *Psal.* 78. 35. *Behold, he smote the rock, can he give bread also?* This indeed was their trade all along their wilderneſse-march. Wherefore God gives them their character, not by what they seemed to be while his mercies were pipeing hot, and the feast stood before them, then they could say, *God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer*) but by their temper and carriage in streights; when the cloth was drawn, and the feast taken out of their sight, what opinion then had they of God? could they sanctifie his Name so far, as to trust him for their dinner to morrow, who had feasted them yesterday? Truly no, as soon as they feel their hunger return, like froward children they are crying, as if God meant to starve them. Wherefore God spits on the face of their praises,

and

and owns not their hypocritical acknowledgments, but sets their ingratitude upon record; *They forgat his Works, and waited not for his counsel.* Oh how sad is this! that after God hath entertained a soul many a time at his table with choice mercies and deliverances, these should be so ill husbanded, that not a bit of them all should be left to give faith a meal, thereby to keep the heart from fainting, when God comes not so fast to deliver as we desire? He is the most thankful man that ponders up the mercies of God in his memory, and can feed his faith with the thoughts of what God hath done for him, so as to walk in the strength thereof in present streights. When *Job* was on the dung-hill, he forgat not Gods old kindnesses, but durst trust him with a knife at his throat, *Though he kill me yet will I trust in him.* He that distrusts God after former experience, is like the foolish builder, *Matth.*7. he rears his monument for past mercies on the sand, which the next tide of affliction washeth away.

Tenthly and lastly, Thou must not onely praise God thy self, while on the stage of this earth, but endeavour to transmit the memorial of his goodness to posterity. The *Psalmist* speaking of the mercies of God, *Psal.* 78. 4. saith, *We will not hide them from our children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord.* Children are their parents heirs, they enter upon their estates; it were unnatural for a father before he dies, to bury up his treasure in the earth, where his children should not find or enjoy it; now the mercies of God are not the least part of his treasure, nor the least of his childs inheritance, being both helps to their faith, matter for their praise, and spurs to their obedience, *Psal.*44. *Our fathers have told us what works thou hast done in their days, how thou didst drive out the heathen, &c verse.*2,3. from this they ground their confidence, *verse.* 4. *Thou art my King, O God, command deliverances for Jacob*; and excite their thankfulness, *verse.* 8. *In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy Name for ever.* Indeed as children are their parents heirs, so they become in justice liable to pay their parents debts; now the great debt which the Saint at death stands charged with, is that which he ows to God for his mercies, and therefore it is but reason he should tie his posterity to the payment thereof. Thus maist thou be praising God in heaven and earth at the same time. 10.

CHAP. LX.

A reproof to the ungrateful world, where several kinds of ingratitude are discovered.

WE shall wind up this Head with a double Application, of Reproof and Exhortation.

Use 1. First, Of Reproof. How few alas can we find so ingenuous, as to pay this little quit-rent to the *Great Lord* of this worlds *Mannor*, for all the mercies they hold of him? Some are such bruits, that like swine their nose is nailed to the trough in which they feed; they have not the use of their understanding so far, as to lift up their eye to heaven and say, There dwells that God that provides this for me, that God by whom I live, and from whom I have my livelihood. 'Twere well if we knew not in all our Towns where such bruits as these dwell. You would count it a sad spectacle, to behold a man in a Lethargy, with his senses and reason so blasted by his disease, that he knows not his nearest friends, and takes no notice of those that tend him, or bring his daily food to him. How many such senslesse wretches are at this day lying upon his hands? Divine Providence ministers daily supplies to their necessities, but they take no notice of his care and goodness. *Others* there are that feloniously, yea, sacrilegiously, set the crown of praise on their own head, which is due alone to God. Thus *Nebuchadnezzar* writes his own name upon his palace, and leaves God out of the story. *Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the Kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my Majesty? Dan.* 4. 30. Proud wretch! was not every stone he used in that pile cut out of Gods Quarrie? and for every skep of sand did he not come upon Gods ground? Thus the Atheistical Husbandman cons his plough and dung-cart more thanks

thanks than the God of Heaven, who crowns the year with his goodneſſe. The proud ſouldier ſtands upon his ſword, daring to take the honor of his victory to himſelf, and not aſcribe it to the Lord of hoſts, who at his pleaſure gives and takes away the heart from the mighty. Yea ſome, rather than God ſhall have it, will give it to any other; thus *Pope Adrian* in his blaſphemous inſcription on the gates of a Colledge he built, abuſeth God with Scripture-language, *Utritch* planted me, *Lovain* watered me, and *Ceſar* gave the increaſe; which made one under write, *Nihil hic Deus fecit*, it ſeems God did nothing for this man. Not that I think it unlawful to acknowledge our benefactors, as inſtruments in Gods hand for our good; but to blot out the Name of God our chief founder, to write the name of an underling creature, is a high piece of wickedneſſe and ingratitude. I like that form which a good man uſed to his friend for a kindneſſe, *I bleſſe God for you, I thank God and you.* He that will exact more, requires what we owe him not. In a word, *Some*, the worſt of the three, inſtead of returning thanks to God for his mercies, abuſe them to his diſhonor; 'tis not more ſad then true, that the goodneſſe of God with many ſerves but to feed and nouriſh their luſts; they eat and drink at Gods coſt, and then riſe up to play the Rebels againſt God, no weapons will ſerve them to uſe but the mercies he hath given them. 'Tis too bad if the tenant pays not his eaſie rent, but to make ſtrip and waſte of the trees on his Land-lords ground, this is more intolerable; yet ſuch outrages are daily practiſed in the wicked world with the mercies of God. *Michael Balbus* is infamous for his horrid ingratitude, who the ſame night that the *Emperor* had pardoned and releaſed him, barbarouſly ſlew his Saviour: And do not many, whom God lets out of the priſon of affliction, lift up their traiterous knife at God, wounding his Name with their oaths, drunkenneſſe, and profaneneſſe, as ſoon almoſt as the ſentence of death is taken off, and their priſon-door ſet open? To conclude, others that will needs paſſe for thankful, yet all the return is but windy praiſe, honor him with their lips, and pour contempt upon him in their lives. What muſick more harſh and unpleaſing, than to hear a Harper ſing to one tune with his voice, and play another with his hand? Oh it grates in Gods ears when *Jacobs* voice is attended with *Eſaus* rough hands. Truly when I conſider, how the goodneſſe of God is abuſed

and perverted by the greateſt part of mankind, I cannot but be of his mind that ſaid, *Maximum miraculum, eſt Dei patientia & munificentia*; The greateſt miracle in the world, is Gods patience and bounty to an ungrateful world. If a Prince hath an enemy got into one of his Towns, he doth not ſend them in proviſion, but lays cloſe ſiege to the place, and doth what he can to ſtarve them. But the great God, that could wink all his enemies into deſtruction, bears with them, and is at daily coſt to maintain them. Well may he command us to bleſs them that curſe us, who himſelf does good to the evil and unthankful. O what would not God do for his creature if thankful, that thus heaps the coals of his mercies upon the heads of his enemies? But think not, ſinners, that you ſhall 'ſcape thus; Gods mill goes ſlow, but it grinds ſmall; the more admirable his patience and bounty now is, the more dreadful and unſupportable will that fury be which ariſeth out of his abuſed goodneſſe. Nothing blunter than iron, yet when ſharpened, it hath an edge that will cut mortally. Nothing ſmoother than the ſea, yet when ſtirr'd into a tempeſt, nothing rageth more. Nothing ſo ſweet as the patience and goodneſſe of a God, and nothing ſo terrible as his wrath when it takes fire. Be therefore in the fear of God ſtirred up to bethink your ſelves what you mean to do. 'Tis the trick they ſay of diſtracted people, to ſpight their deareſt friends and neareſt relation moſt, theſe above all they ſeek to miſchieve; but what folly and madneſſe is it in thee to fly at the face of God with thy ſins, that hath done more for thee than all thy friends, and can do more againſt thee than all thy enemies thou haſt in the world? But the more to move thee,

1. Firſt, conſider, That God keeps an exact account of all his mercies thou receiveſt. You cannot ſteal Gods cuſtom. He that could tell the *Prophet* where his ſervant *Gehazi* had been, and what he had received of *Naaman*, will one day tell thee to a farthing every talent thou haſt received of him. God hath; as a bag for thy ſins, ſo a book for his mercies; and what he books he means to reckon for.

2. Secondly, conſider, How ſeverely he hath dealt with thoſe, that never had ſo much mercy from him as thy ſelf. If *Heathens* are ſpeechleſſe in judgment, when God reckons with them for their mercies, O how confounded wilt thou be that goeſt from Goſpel-diſpenſations to hold up thy hand at the Bar before the

Judge

Judge of all the world? *Rom.* 1. 21. *They are without excuse, because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.* If the Heathen that was not thankful for his penny, cannot lift up his hand in the day of the Lord, where wilt thou appear, that haſt ſo many hundred Talents in thy hand to anſwer for?

Queſt. But may be, poor wretch, thou maiſt now ask, What thou ſhouldſt do to give God the praiſe of his mercies?

Anſw. In a word, Thou haſt but one way to pay God this his tribute, and it is a ſtrange one, even by running deeper into his debt, than by all the mercies that yet thou haſt received of him. Hear therefore poor ſinner what I mean, That God, who hath given thee life and being, that hath exerciſed unſpeakable patience towards thee, been at a vaſt expence in his daily providence upon thee, to preſerve, feed, cloath, and maintain thee, all which have been moſt wretchedly abuſed by thee, and for it thy life become forfeited to his juſtice, doth yet offer a greater mercy than all theſe, even the Lord Jeſus, whom if thou wilt, with ſhame and ſorrow for thy paſt ſins, but come unto, and accept to be thy Lord and Saviour, then wilt thou be in a poſture, and not till then, to give God the praiſe of his other mercies; he that rejects this, that is the greateſt of all mercies, can never be thankful for any. It is Chriſt who alone can give thee a ſpirit of thankfulneſſe; not a Chriſtleſſe perſon in the world but is an unthankful perſon, *evil* and *unthankful* are inſeparable. O what a bleſſed Goſpel is this, that teacheth us here to pay debts by running deeper into the ſcore? to be thankful for leſſe mercies, by accepting that which is infinitely greater.

CHAP.

CHAP. LXI.

An Exhortation to Thankfulneſs, preſt on the Saint from ſeveral Arguments.

Uſe 2. SEcondly, For Exhortation to the Saints, not to call you to this duty, which if you anſwer your name is undoubtedly your practice: but to quicken you in it, and make you more in love with it,

1. *Firſt*, Conſider, 'Tis a duty that becomes you well; *Pſal.* 33. *Praiſe is comely for the righteous*; this garment of praiſe ſits ſo well on none as on your back, you ſhould not think your ſelves dreſt in a morning till you have it on. An unthankful Saint carries a contradiction with it. Evil and unthankful are the twins that live and die together; as any ceaſeth to be evil, he begins to be thankful.

2. *Secondly*, 'Tis that which God both expects, and promiſeth himſelf at your hands, he made you for this end. When the Vote paſt in heaven for your being, yea, happy being in Chriſt, it was upon this account, that *you ſhould be a name and a praiſe to him* on earth in time, and in heaven to eternity. Should God miſſe of this, he would fail of one main part of his deſign. What prompts him to beſtow every mercy, but to afford you matter to compoſe a ſong for his praiſe; *They are a people that will not lie, ſo he became their Saviour*, *Iſa.* 63. he looks for fair dealing you ſee at your hands. Whom may a father truſt with his reputation, if not a child? where can a Prince expect honor, if not among his Courtiers and Favourits? Your ſtate is ſuch, as the leaſt mercy you have is more then all the world can ſhew beſides. Thou, Chriſtian, and thy few brethren, divide heaven and earth among you, what hath God that he with-holds from you? Sun, Moon, and Starrs are ſet up to give you light, Sea and Land have their treaſure and ſtore for your uſe; others do but raviſh them,

them, you are the rightful heirs to them; they groan that any other ſhould be ſerved by them. The *Angels* bad and good miniſter unto you; the evil, againſt their will, are forced, like ſcullions, when they tempt you, to ſcour and brighten your graces, and make way for your greater comforts; like *Haman* they hold your ſtirrup, while you mount up higher in favour with God. The good *Angels* are ſervants to your heavenly Father, and diſdain not to carry you, as the nurſe her Maſters child, in her arms. Your God with-holds not himſelf from you, he is your Portion, Father, Husband, Friend, and what not? The ſame heaven you ſhall have to dwell in with him, the ſame table and fare; God is his own happineſſe, and admits you to enjoy himſelf. O what honor is this, for the ſubject to drink in his Princes cup! *Pſal.* 36. 8. *Thou ſhalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleaſures.* And all this not as the purchaſe of your ſweat, much leſſe blood; the feaſt is paid for by another hand, and you are welcome: onely he expects your thanks to the founder of it, at whoſe coſt you are entertained. No ſin-offering is impoſed upon you under the Goſpel, thank-offerings are all he looks for.

Thirdly, God hath a book of remembrance for your ſervices, 3.
he takes kind notice of the little good that is in you, and done by you, not the leaſt office of love to his Name and houſe is over-look'd, though mingled with much evil; he commends the one, pardons and pities you for the other. *There is ſome good found in him toward the Lord God of Iſrael*, 'twas ſaid of *Jeroboam's* ſon, 1 *King.* 14. 13. What an honorable teſtimony doth God give of *Aſa.* 2 *Chron.* 15. 17. that *his heart was perfect all his days*, though we find many wry ſteps he took. The little ſtrength that *Philadelphia* had muſt not be forgot. What a favourable apology doth Chriſt make for *Joſhua*, accuſed by Satan for his filthy garments? *Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* and for his drouſie Diſciples, *The fleſh is weak, but ſpirit is willing?* Now ſhall God take notice of the little good in his Saints, apologize for their infirmities, commend and reward their weak ſervices, yea, eternize their memory with honor, *Pſal.* 112. *The righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance?* and doth not he deſerve to be exalted for his infinite perfections? praiſed and loved who is all good, ever good, and doing good to them? Shall he be tender of thy name, and thou be regardleſſe of his honor, ſo as to entomb

his

his precious mercies in the Sepulchre of unthankfulneſſe?

4. *Fourthly*, Conſider what an ornament a thankful frame of heart is to Religion; This commends God to the unbelieving world, who knows little more of him than your lives preach to them; they read Religion in that character you print it, and make their report of God and his ways, as they ſee you behave your ſelves in the world: if you walk diſconſolately, or grumble at divine providence, how can they believe the ways of God are ſo pleaſant as they are told? We liſten what the ſervant ſaith of his maſter, if he commends him, and goes cheerfully through his work, this gains him credit among his neighbours. It was a convincing teſtimony *Daniel* gave to the goodneſſe of God, when he would praiſe him thrice a day with the hazard of his life. To ſee a poor Chriſtian thankful for his little pittance, yea, in the midſt of his afflictions, as if he had Crowns and Kingdoms at his diſpoſe, an ordinary underſtanding would reaſon thus, Surely this man finds ſome ſweetneſſe in his God that we ſee not, and is better paid for his ſervice than we know of. The joyful praiſes of dying Saints in the midſt of fiery flames, have made their ſpectators go home in love, not onely with Religion, but with Martyrdom.

5. *Fifthly*, Conſider the honor that is put upon you in this duty. To attend on a Prince, though bare-headed, and on the knee, is counted more honor for a Nobleman, than to live in the country, and have the ſervice of his fellow-ſubjects. Though we ſerve God all the day-long, yet in acts of Worſhip we have the honor immediately to attend on him, and miniſter to him: Oh bleſſed are they who may thus ſtand about him! Praiſe is the higheſt act of worſhip, and therefore to be continued in heavens bliſsful ſtate; whereas other graces ſhall be melted into love and joy, ſo other duties of worſhip, as hearing, praying, &c. into praiſe and thankſgiving. The Prieſthood was a great honor under the Law, he choſe *Aaron* and his *Tribe* from among their brethren to ſerve at his Altar; he would take that gift from their hand which he would not at a Kings; but in this Goſpel-ſtate, every believer hath a more honorable Prieſthood, becauſe he brings better ſacrifices, the ſpiritual ſacrifices of praiſe and thankſgiving, and while thou art honoring thy God, thou honoreſt thy ſelf:

The

The whole body ſhines with the beams of that Crown which is put on the head.

Sixthly, Conſider, That thy praiſes will render thy prayers more grateful and ſucceſsful. 'Twas thought a good Omen for *Alexanders* future victories, that he was liberal to the gods in his ſacrifices, throwing Frankincenſe by handfuls into the fire. He is a niggard to himſelf that is ſo to his God. *Remittatur in ſuum principium cœleſte profluvium, quo uberius terræ refundatur, Bern. Serm.* 42. *in Cantic.* Let the River of Gods mercies be return'd to pay its tribute to God their ſource and fountain, that they may refund more abundantly to us again. You ſhall obſerve the Saints in their greateſt ſtreights, when they have moſt to beg, deliver their prayers praiſe-wiſe. *Jehoſhaphat* ſends his Prieſts praiſing God into the field, and God fights for him. *David* in the Cave, *My heart is fixed, I will ſing and give praiſe. Daniel*, when a trap was laid for his life, *praiſeth God thrice a day.* Chriſt himſelf, when he would raiſe *Lazarus*, lifts up his eyes and bleſſeth God, *I thank thee, O Father, &c.* When he was to ſuffer, ſings an hymn. A thankful heart cannot eaſily meet with a denial; *Let the high praiſes of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged ſword in their hand, Pſal.* 149. 6. 6

Verſ. 18. *In the Spirit.*

WE are come to the third branch in the *Apoſtles* directory for prayer, the principle or ſpring from whence they are to flow, *the Spirit, Praying in the Spirit.*

CHAP. I.

What it is to pray in the ſpirit ſhewn.

Queſt. But what is it to pray in the Spirit?

Anſw. Interpreters generally comprehend in this phraſe, both the ſpirit of the perſon praying, and the Spirit of God, by which our ſpirits are fitted for, and acted in prayer. *Eſt oratio in ſpiritu, nempe & noſtro quo oramus, & Spiritu ſancto per quem oramus*; ſo *Zanch. in loc.* That is a payer in the ſpirit, which by the help of the holy Spirit is performed with our ſoul and ſpirit. Theſe two indeed go ever together, we cannot act our ſpirit without the holy Spirit; alas, this is like a lump of clay in our boſoms till he quickens it, and we cannot but pray with our heart and ſpirit, when the holy Spirit moves upon it. The Spirits breath is vital. The holy Ghoſt doth not breathe in us, as one through a Trunck or Trumpet, which is a meer paſſive inſtrument; but ſtirs up our hearts, and actuates our affections in the duty. Prayer is called, *A pouring out of the ſoul to God*; the ſoul is the well, from which the water of prayer is poured; but the Spirit is the ſpring that feeds this well, and the hand that helps to pour it forth; the well would have no water without the ſpring, neither could it deliver it ſelf of it without one to draw it. Thus the Spirit of God muſt fill the heart with praying affections, and enable them alſo to pour themſelves forth.

From the words thus ſenc't, we ſhall a while dwell upon theſe two Propoſitions.

Obſerv. 1. He who will pray acceptably, muſt pray in his heart and ſpirit.

Obſerv. 2. He that would pray in his own ſpirit, muſt pray in the Spirit of God.

To

To begin with the first. Praying in the spirit is opposed to lip-labour, *They draw near to me with their lips, but their heart is removed far from me*, like an adultereſſe, whoſe heart and ſpirit is as far from her husband, as where her paramour is. 'Tis no prayer, in which the heart of the perſon bears no part. *Pariſienſis* gloſſing upon that place of *Hoſ.* 14. 2. *So will we render the calves of our lips*, compares the duty of prayer to the calves in the legal ſacrifices; The compoſure of the words (ſaith he) in prayer is as the skin or hide of the beaſt, the voice as the hair, the underſtanding as the fleſh, the deſires and affections of the heart, fat of the inwards; this, and this alone, makes it a prayer in Gods account. *My ſpirit prayeth* (ſaith the *Apoſtle*) 1 *Cor.* 14. 4. and in *verſ.* 15. *I will pray with the ſpirit, and ſing with the ſpirit.* So, *Rom.* 1. 9. *God whom I ſerve in the ſpirit.* The melodious ſound which comes from a muſical Inſtrument (ſuch as *Viol* or *Lute*) is formed within the belly of the inſtrument, and the deeper the belly of the inſtrument, the ſweeter is its muſick; the ſame ſtrings on a flat board, touched by the ſame hand would make no muſick. The melodiouſneſſe of prayer comes from within the man, *We are the circumciſion which worſhip God in the ſpirit*; and the deeper the groans are that come from thence, ſtill the ſweeter the melody. There may be outward worſhip, and inward atheiſm, as *Melanchton* ſaid, *Vos Itali adoratis Deum in pane, quum non creditis in cœlo eſſe.* There may be much pomp in the outward ceremony of the performance, when the perſon neither loves nor believes that God whom he courts with an external devotion. The blemiſhes which made the ſacrifices in the Law rejected, were not onely in the outward limbs of the beaſt, the ſick as well as the lame beaſt was refuſed. *Mal.* 1. 8. we read of loud praiſes, when never a word was heard ſpoken. But God owns none for a prayer that hath the vehemency of the voice, but not inſpirited with the affection of the heart. Separate the ſpirit from the body, and the man is dead; the heart from the lip, and there is a diſſolution of prayer. Now in handling of this I muſt firſt ſhew, What it is to pray in our ſpirit, and then, Why we are thus to pray. *Obſerv.* 1.

For the firſt, We pray in our ſpirit when theſe three are found in the duty: *Firſt*, When we pray with knowledge. *Secondly*, when we pray in fervency. *Thirdly*, When we pray in ſincerity. Theſe three exerciſe the three powers of the ſoul and ſpirit: 1.

By knowledge, the understanding is set on work; by fervency, the affections; and by sincerity, the will: all these are required in conjunction to praying in the spirit. There may be knowledge without fervency, and this (like the light of the Moon) is cold, and quickens not; there may be heat without knowledge, and this is like metall in a blind horse; there may be knowledge and fervency, and this is like a chariot with swift horses, and a skilful driver in the box, but being dishoneſt, carries it the wrong way. Neither of these, nor both these together avail, because sincerity is wanting to touch these affections, and make them stand to the right point, which is the glory of God. He will have little thanks for his zeal that is fervent in spirit, but serving himself with it, not the Lord.

CHAP. II.

Sheweth, To pray in the spirit is required that we pray with understanding; also why this is required, and what understanding is required.

FIrst, to pray acceptably is required we pray with understanding: A blind sacrifice was rejected in the Law, *Mal.* 1. 8. much more are blind devotions under the Gospel. As knowledge aggravates a sin, so ignorance takes from the excellency of an action that is good. *I bear them witnesse* (saith *Paul*) *they have a zeal, but not according to knowledge.* The want of an eye disfigures the faireſt face, the want of knowledge the devouteſt prayer. *Ye worship ye know not what, we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews, Joh.* 4. 22. where we see, what a fundamental defect the want of knowledge is in acts of worship,

worship, such as brings damnation with it. But why is knowledge so requisite to acceptable praying?

SECT. I.

FIrst, Because without this 'tis not a reasonable service, for we know not what we do. God calls for λόγικην λατρείαν, *Rom.* 12. 1. which some oppose to the legal sacrifices; they offered up beasts to God, in the Gospel we are to offer our selves. Now the soul and spirit of a man is the man. Why did not God lay a Law on beasts to worship him, but because they have not a rational soul to understand and reflect upon their own actions? And will God accept that service and worship from man, wherein he doth not exercise that faculty that distinguisheth him from a beast? *Shew your selves men*, saith the *Prophet* to those idolaters, *Isa.* 46. 8. And truly he that worships the true God ignorantly, is bruitish in his knowledge as well as he that prays to a false God. 1.

Secondly, Because the understanding is τὸ ἡγεμόνικον, the leading faculty of the soul, and so the key of the work, the inward worship of the heart is the chief; now the other powers of the soul are disabled if they want this their guide which holds the candle to them. As for those violent passions of seeming zeal, sorrow and joy, which sometimes appear in ignorant worshippers, and their blind devotions, they are spurious. Christs sheep, like *Jacobs*, conceive by the eye. First, the Saints eye is enlightned to see the Majesty and glorious holiness of God, and then it revives him, and mourns before him in the sense of his own vileness. *Now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor my self and repent in dust and ashes*, *Job* 42. Again, By an eye of faith he beholds the goodness and love of God to poor sinners in Christ, and in particular to him, and this eye affects his heart to love and rely on him, which it is impossible the ignorant soul should do. 2.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Queſt. But you will ſay, What is neceſſary for the praying ſoul to know?

Anſw. 1. First, That he to whom he directs his prayer is the true God. Religious worſhip is an incommunicable flower in the Crown of the Deity, and that both inward and outward. We are religiouſly to woſhrip him onely, who by reaſon of his infinite perfections, deſerves our ſupream love, honor, and truſt. He muſt have the Crown that owes the Kingdom; the *kingdom and power* is Gods, therefore *the glory* of religious worſhip belongs to him alone, *Matth.* 6. 13. Angels are the higheſt order of creatures, but we are forbid to *worſhip any of the hoſt of heaven*, *Deut.* 17. 3. *Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations? for to thee it doth appertain.* Where fear is put for religious worſhip, as appears by the circumſtance of the place. The want of this knowledge fill'd the Heathen world with Idolatry, for where they found any vertue or excellency in the creature, preſently they adored and worſhipped it; like ſome ignorant ruſtick, who coming to Court, thinks every one he ſees in brave cloaths to be the King.

2. Secondly, There is required a knowledge of this true God what his nature is; *He that comes to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of thoſe that diligently ſeek him*, *Heb.* 11. 6. 'Tis confeſt, a perfect knowledge of the divine perfections is incomprehenſible by a finite being. He anſwered right who ſaid, when asked, *Quid eſt Deus? Si ſcirem eſſem ipſe Deus*; none indeed knows God thus but God himſelf; yet a Scripture-knowledge of him is neceſſary to the right performance of this duty. The want of underſtanding his omniſcience and infinite mercy, is the cauſe of vain babling; and a conceit to prevail by long prayers, which our Saviour charges upon the Heathen, and prevents in his Diſciples by acquainting them with theſe Attributes, *Matth.* 6. 7, 8. They came rather *narrare* than *rogare*, to inform God than to beg. The ignorance of his high and glorious Majeſty is the cauſe, why many are ſo rude and ſlovenly in their geſture, ſo fawcy and irreverently familiar with God in their expreſſions. We are bid to *be ſober, watching unto prayer.* Truly there is an inſobriety in our very language, when we do not cloath the deſires of our hearts with

with such humble expressions, as may signifie the awe and dread of his sacred Majesty in our hearts. In a word, the reason why men dare come reaking out of the adulterous imbraces of their lusts, and stretch forth their unwashen hands to heaven in prayer, whence is it, but because they know not God to be of such infinite purity, as will have no fellowship with the workers of iniquity? *Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thy self*, *Psal.* 50. 21.

Thirdly, We must understand the matter of our prayers, what we beg, what we deprecate, without which we cannot in faith say *Amen* to our own prayers, but may soon ask that which neither becomes us to desire, nor is honorable for God to give. This Christ rebuked, when she in the Gospel put up her ambitious request for her children, to be set, one at the right, the other at the left hand of Christ in his Kingdom. God never gave us leave thus to indite our own prayers, by the dictate of our private spirit, but hath bound us up to ask onely what he hath promised to give. 3.

Fourthly, A knowledge of the manner how we are to pray, as in whose name, and what qualifications are required in the prayer and person praying. We find *Paul* begging prayers, *that ye strive together with me in your prayers*; in another place he tells us of a lawful striving, 2 *Tim.* 2. 5. There is a Law of Prayer, which must be observed, or we come at our own adventure; even in false worship they go by some rule in their addresses to their gods; therefore those smattering *Samaritans*, 2 *King.* 17. 26. when a plague was on them, concluded the reason to be, because *they knew not the manner of the God of the land.* The true God will be served in due order, or else expect a breach. A word or two for application of this branch. 4.

SECT. III.

FIrst, How few then pray in the Spirit? were this the onely Character to try many by, would they not be cast over the bar for meer bablers? as *first*, those in the *Popish Church*, where most know not a word what they say in prayer. If it be such a weakness to subscribe a Petition to a *King*, or to a *Parliament*, which *Use* 1.

which we never read nor understood; what shall we then think of such bruitish prayers as these, sent to heaven, and endorsed with an *ignoramus* on the back of them? Yea, amongst our selves, many, who though they pray in their mother-language, yet are as ignorant as to the matter of their prayers; how else could they patter over the Creed and Commandments with their blind devotion instead of prayers? Are there more deplored ruines of mankind to be found among the Indians than such? Yea, when they joyn with their Minister in prayer, neither know that God to whom the prayer is directed, nor the Mediator under the favour of whose Name it is presented. Before *Nebuchadnezzar* could blesse God, he had the understanding of a man given him, which these yet want. Do you not think such ignorant wretches as these might be easily perswaded to kneel before an Image gaudily drest up, or to put their Letter into some Angel or Saints hand for dispatch, being made to believe, that it will find a kinder welcom by the mediation of such favourites? Oh what a darkness is their even at this day upon the face of our waters! on which had but the *Popes* instruments opportunity to sit brooding awhile, they might soon bring their desired work to a perfection among the multitude of ignorant souls that are amidst us? We see there is need not onely to stir up our people to pray, but to help them to knowledge how they may pray, or else we send them before they have learned their errand; as if we should call a child to read before he hath learned his letters.

Use 2. Secondly, it speaks to all that are at any time the mouth to God for others in prayer, so to pray, that those who joyn with them may clearly understand what they put up to God for them. Who is more to be blamed, he that prayeth in an unknown tongue, or he that with such uncouth phrases, and high-flown expressions, as are not understood by half the company? Suppose thine own spirit prays, (as the *Apostle* saith) yet thy understanding is unfruitful unto them; they also are at a losse, and stand gazing, as the Disciples did, when the clowd parted Christ from them. Either come down from thy high touring expressions, or help them up to thee. They may say of thee as those of *Moses*, *We know not what is become of the man.* No wonder, if while they cannot keep sight of the matter in hand, that their thoughts rove and dance about some object of their own framing. Dost thou pray to

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be admired for thy rouling tongue, heighth of gifts, or the like? perhaps thou maist have this thy reward of some ignorant ones, and others that would as fain commend themselves upon the same account; but consider what a low and base end thou propoundest in so high a service, unworthy of a Christians thought. What? no net to fish with for thy credit & applause but a sacred Ordinance? The whip which Christ made in the Gospel belongs to thy back. Our blessed Saviour that was all on fire with zeal to see his house of prayer made a house of merchandise, O how doth his soul loath the baseness of thy mercenary spirit, who dost the same, though in another dresse?

CHAP. III.

Shews, to praying in the spirit is required fervency, and two reasons why this is required.

THe second thing required in praying with our spirit is Fervency. The soul keeps the body warm while it is in it, so much as there is of our soul and spirit in a duty, so much heat and fervency. If the prayer be cold, we may certainly conclude the heart is idle, and bears no part in the duty. Our spirit is an active creature, what it doth is with a force, whether bad or good. Hence in Scripture, to set the heart and soul upon a thing imports vehemency and fervour; thus the poor labouring man is said to *set his heart on his wages*, *Deut.* 24. 15. the hopes of what he shall have at night makes him sweat at his work in the day. *Nebuchadnezzar set his heart on Daniel to deliver him*; and it follows, *He laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him*, *Dan.* 6. When the spirit of a man is set about a work, he will do it to purpose; *If thou shalt seek the Lord with all thy heart and all thy soul*, *Deut.* 4 29. that is, fervently. This consists not in a violent agitation of the bodily spirits, a man may 2.

put his body into a sweat in duty, and the prayer be cold; that is the fervent prayer that flows from a warm heart, and enkindled affections; like an exhalation which first is set on fire in the cloud, and then breaks forth into thunder; *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire kindled, then spake I with my tongue. Lord make me to know mine end, Psal.* 39. 3, 4. Now as zeal is not one single affection, but the edge and vehemency of them all; so fervency in prayer is when all the affections act strongly and suitably to the several parts of prayer. *In confession*, when the soul melts into a holy shame and sorrow for the sins he spreads before the Lord, so that he feels a holy smart and pain within, and doth not act a tragical part with a comical heart; for, as *Chrysostom* saith, *To paint tears is worse than to paint the face.* Here is true fervency, *I mourn in my complaint and make a noise, Psal.* 55. 2. There may be fire in the pan, when none in the piece, a loud wind, but no rain with it. *David* made a noise with his voice, and mourned in his spirit. So *in Petition*, when the heart is drawn out with vehement desires of the grace it prays for, not some lazy wouldings or wishings, or weak vellieties, but passionate breathings and breakings of heart, sometimes set out by the violence of thirst, which is thought more tormenting than that of hunger. As the hunted Hart panteth after the cool waters, so did *Davids* soul after God, *Psal.* 42. Sometimes by the strainings of a wrestler, so *Jacob* is said to wrestle with the Angel; and of those that run in a race, *Act.* 26. 7. *Instantly serving God day and night*; ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ, they stretched out themselves. *My soul breaketh for longing, Psal.* 119. 20. as one that with straining breaks a vein.

Quest. But why must we thus pray in the spirit fervently?

Answ. 1. First, From the command, *Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy strength, with all thy might, and his word shall be in thy heart.* Which imports the affectionate performance of every command and duty. Sever the outward from the inward part of Gods worship, and he owns it not; *Who hath required this at your hands?* said God to them that were enough prodigal of their sacrifices, *Isa.* 1. 12. as if he had said, Did I ever command you to give a beasts heart in sacrifice, and keep back your own? Why dost thou pray at all? Wilt thou say, Because he commands it? then why not fervently, which the command intends chiefly? When you send for-

for a Book, would you be pleased with him that brings onely the cover? and will God accept the skin for the sacrifice? the external part of the duty is but as the Cup, thy Love, Faith, and Joy are the Wine he desires to taste of; without these, thou givest him but an empty cup to drink in; now what is this but to mock him?

Secondly, To comport with the Name of God. The common description of prayer is calling on the Name of God. Now as in prayer we call upon the Name of God, so it must be with a worship suitable to his Name, or else we pollute it and incurr his wrath; this is the chief meaning of the Third Commandment: In the *first* God provides, that none besides himself, the onely true God, be worshipped; in the *second*, that he the true God be not served with will-worship, but his own institutions; and in the *third*, that he be not served vainly and slightily in his own worship. There is no Attribute in God but calls for this fervency in his worship. 1.

First, He is a great and glorious God, and as such, it becomes us to approach his presence with our affections in the best array. Are yawning prayers fit for a great Gods hearing? darest thou speak to such a Majesty before thou art well awake, and hast such a sacrifice prepared as he will accept? *Cursed be the deceiver that hath in his flock a male, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing. For I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my Name is dreadful among the Heathen.* See here, *first*, any thing lesse than the best we have, is a corrupt thing; he will accept a little if the best, but he abhors that thou shouldest save thy best for another. *Again*, He that offers not the best, the strength of his affections, is a deceiver, because he robs him of his due, and he is a great God. 'Tis fit the Princes table should be served with the best that the market affords, and not the refuse. When *Jacob* intended a present to the Governor of the land, he bids his children *take of the best of the fruit of the land in their vessels. Lastly*, The awful thoughts, which God extorts from the very Heathen by his mighty works, do reproach us, who live in the bosom of the Church, and despise his Name by our heedlesse and heartlesse serving of him. 1.

Secondly, He is the living God. Is a dead-hearted prayer a sacrifice suitable to a living God? how can that be accepted of him which never came from him? Lay not your dead prayers by 2.

his side, the lively prayer is his, the dead thine own. What the *Psalmist* saith of persons, we may say of prayers, *The living, the living they shall praise him.* The glorious Angels, who for their zeal are called *Seraphims*, and a flame of fire, these he chuseth to minister to him in heaven, and the Saints below (who though they sojourn on earth, yet have their extraction from heaven, and so have spirits raised and refined from the dulnesse of their earthly constitution) these he sets apart for himself as Priests, to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto him. The quicker any one is himself, the more offensive is a dull leaden-heel'd messenger, or slow-handed-workman to him. How then can God, who is all life, brook thy lazy listlesse devotions? When he commanded the neck of an Asse to be broke, and not offered up unto him, was it because he was angry with the beast? no sure, it was his own workmanship, no other than himself made it; but to teach us, how unpleasing a dull heart is to him in his service.

3. Thirdly, He is a loving God, and love will be paid in no coin but its own. Give God love for love, or he accounts you give him nothing. *If ye love me, keep my commandements, Joh.* 14. And, *If a man would give the substance of his house for love, it would be contemned, Cant.* 8. 7. So, if a man thinks to commute with God, and give him any thing in prayer instead of his love and fervent affection, it will be contemned. Let the prayer be never so pithy, the posture of the body never so devout, the voice never so loud, if the affections of the heart be not drawn out after God in the duty, he disdains and rejects it, because it doth not correspond with the dear affections which God expresseth to us: He draws out his heart with his purse, and gives his very soul and self with all his gifts to his people, therefore he expects our hearts should come with all our services to him. It is no wonder to see the servant, whose Master is hard and cruel, have no heart to, or metal in his work; but love in the Master useth to put life into the servant; and therefore God, who is incomparably the best Master, disdains to be served as none but the worst among men use to be.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Contains a third reaſon of the Point, and alſo ſhews how few pray in the ſpirit.

THirdly, The promiſe is onely to fervent prayer. 3.
A ſtill-born child is no heir, neither is a prayer that wants life heir to any promiſe. Fervency is to prayer what fire was to the ſpices in the Cenſor, without this it cannot aſcend as incenſe before God. Some have attempted a ſhorter cut to the *Indies* by the *North*, but were ever frozen up in their way; and ſo will all ſluggiſh prayers be ſerved. It were an eaſie voyage indeed to heaven, if ſuch prayers might find the way thither; but never could they ſhew any of that good Lands gold who prayed thus, though he were a Saint. The righteous man indeed is declared heir, as to all other promiſes, ſo to this of having his prayer heard; but he hath not *aptitudinem intrandi*, he is not in a fit poſture to enter into the poſſeſſion of this promiſe, or claim preſent benefit from it, while his heart remains cold and formal in the duty. There is a qualification to the act of prayer as neceſſary, as of the perſon praying, *The fervent prayer of the righteous perſon availeth much.* When God intends a mercy for his people, he ſtirs up a ſpirit of prayer in them, *I never ſaid to the ſeed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain*; that is, I never ſtirr'd them up to it, and helped them in it, and then let them loſe their labour. *Jer.* 29. 12. *Then ſhall ye go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. Ye ſhall ſeek me and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your heart.* Feeble deſires, like weak pangs, go over, and bring not a mercy to the birth. As the full time grows nearer, ſo the ſpirit of prayer grows ſtronger. *Shall not he avenge his elect that cry day and night unto him? I tell you he will avenge them ſpeedily, Luk.* 18. 7. None in the houſe perhaps will ſtir

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for a little knock at the door, they think he is some idle beggar, or one in no great haste; but if he raps thick and loud, then they go, yea, out of their beds; *Luk.* 11. 8. *Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity.*

Use 1. First, This sadly shews, there is little true praying to be found among us, because few that pray fervently. Let us sort men into their several ranks; *first*, the ignorant, Do these pray fervently? their hearts alas must needs be frozen up in the duty, they dwell too far from the Sun, to have any of this divine heat in their devotions. *Secondly*, The profane person, that is debauched with his filthy lusts, his heat runs out another way. Can the heart which is inflamed with lusts be any other than cold in prayer? hell-fire must be quenched before this from heaven can be kindled. *Thirdly*, The soul under the power of roving thoughts, whose mind (like Satan) is walking to and fro the earth, while his eyes seem nailed to heaven; Can he be fervent? can the affections be intended, and the mind inattentive? Fervency unites the soul, and gathers in the thoughts to the work in hand; it will not suffer diversions, but answers all forreign thoughts, as *Nehemiah*, in another case, did them that would have call'd him off from building, *I am about a great work so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease? Neh.* 6. 3. 'Tis said of *Elia*, *he prayed earnestly*, he prayed in praying, so the *Greek*; as in *Ezekiels* vision, there was a wheel in a wheel, so a prayer in his prayer. Whereas the roaving soul is prayer-lesse, his lips pray and his mind plays; his eye is up to heaven, as if that were his mark, but he shoots his thoughts down to the earth. *Fourthly*, He to whom the duty is tedious and wearisom, who doth not sigh and groan in the duty, but under it; who prays as a sick man works in his calling, finding no delight or joy in it. True fervency suffers no wearinesse, feels no pain. The Tradseman when hot at his work, and the Souldier in fight, the one feels not his wearinesse, nor the other his wounds. Affections are strong things, able to pull up a weak body. Therefore he that shrugs at a duty, and turns this way, and that way, as a sick man from one side of his bed to the other for ease, shews he hath little content in the duty, and therefore lesse zeal. These aches of the spirit in prayer (though he be a Saint) come of some cold that he hath gotten, and declare him to be under a great distemper. A man in health finds not more

more savour in his food and refreshing from it, than the Christian doth in the offices of Religion, when his heart is in the right temper.

CHAP. V.

Some moving Arguments to enkindle our zeal and fervency in prayer.

SEcondly, for Exhortation. Dost thou pray? Pray fervently or thou dost nothing. Cold prayer is no more prayer, than painted fire is fire. That prayer which warms not thine own heart, will it, thinkest thou, move Gods? thou drawest the tap, but the vessel is frozen. A man hath not the use of his hand clung up with cold, neither canst thou have the use of thy spirit in duty, till thy heart be chafed into some sense and feeling of what thou prayest for. Now to bring thy cold heart into some spiritual heat, *Use 2.*

SECT. I.

FIrst, Consider the excellency of zeal and fervency; if a Saint, thou hast a principle that inclines thee to approve of things that are excellent; and such is this. Life is the excellency of beings, yea, even in inanimate creatures; there is an Analogical life, and therein consists their excellencie. The spirits of wine commend it, what is it worth when dead and flat? In the Diamond, the sparkle gives the worth; in fonntain-water, that which makes it more excellent than other is its motion, called therefore *living water*; much more in beings that have true life; for this, the Flea or Fly are counted nobler creatures than the Sun. The higher kind of life that beings have, their nature is thereby the more advanced, *1.*

advanced, beasts above plants, men above beasts, and Angels above men. Now as life gives the excellency to being, so vivacity and vigour in operating gives excellency to life. Indeed the nobler the life of the creature is, the greater energy is in its actings; the apprehension of an Angel is quicker, and zeal stronger, than in a man. So that the more lively thou art in thy duty, and the more zeal thou expressest therein, the nearer thou comest to the nature of those glorious spirits, who for their zeal in the service of God are called *a flame of fire*. I confesse, to be calm and cool in inferiour things, and in our own matters betwixt man and man, is better than zeal; so *Solomon* saith, *Prov.* 17. 27. *A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit*, in the *Hebrew* 'tis a cool spirit, injuries do not put him into a flame, neither do any occurrencies in the world heat him to any heighth of joy, grief, or anger: Who more temperate in these than *Moses*? but set this holy man to pray, he is fire and tow, all life and zeal. Indeed it is one excellency of this fervency of spirit in prayer, that it allays all sinful passions. *Davids* fervency in praying for his child when alive, made him bear the tydings of his death so calmly and patiently. We hear not an angry word that *Hanna* replies to her scolding companion *Peninnah*, and why? but because she had found the art of easing her troubled spirit in prayer; what need she contend with her adversary, who could by wrestling with God perswade him to espouse her quarrel? and truly were there nothing else to commend fervency of spirit in prayer, this is enough, that like *Davids* Harp it can charm the evil spirit of our passions, which in their excesse the Saint counts great sins, and I am sure finds them grievous troubles. When are you more placate and serene, than when with most life and fervour your souls can mount up in the flame of your sacrifices into the bosom of God? Possibly you may come like *Moses* down the Mount with greater heat, but it will be against sin, not for self; whereas a formal prayer like a plaister, which hath good ingredients in it, yet being laid cold upon the wound, hurts it rather than heals it.

SECT.

Sect. II.

SEcondly, God deserves the prime and strength of thy soul should be bestowed on him in thy prayers. *First*, He gave thee the powers of thy soul, and all thy affections. According to the mould, so is the statue that is cast in it; such thou art, as thou wert in the *Idea* of the Divine Mind. Now may not thy Maker call for that which was his gift? He that made the stone an inanimate being, and confined the narrow souls of bruits to act upon some low sensitive good, ennobleth thee with a rational appetite and spiritual affections. Now wilt thou not employ those divine powers in the worship of thy God, from whom thou hadst them? this were hard indeed, that God should be denyed what himself gave, and not suffered to taste of his own cost: *I came to my own* (saith Christ) *and they would not receive me.* Thus here, I came to my own creature, he had his life from me, and brings a dead heart unto me. Suppose a friend should give you notice, that he will ere long be at your house, and sends you in before-hand a vessel of rich wine, would you when he comes grudge to broach it for his entertainment, and put him off with that which is dead and flat? Expectest thou a better friend to be thy guest than thy God? The Psalmist calls upon us to *serve the Lord with gladnesse*, and what is his enforcement? *Know ye that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us, Psal.* 100. Who plants a Vineyard, and looks not to drink of the wine? If God calls our corn and wine his, he therefore expects to be served with them; much more with our love and joy, for surely he allows us not to alienate the best of his gifts from him. When thou art therefore going to pray, call up thy affections, which haply are asleep on some creatures lap, as *Jonah* in the sides of the ship, *Awake, sleeper, and call upon thy God. Secondly*, He deserves thy affections, because he gives thee his; he is jealous of thee, because he is zealous for thee. Well may he complain of thy cold dreaming prayers, whose heart is on a flame of love to thee. High and admirable are the expressions with which he sets forth his dear love to his people, whatever he doth for them is with a zeal; *in protecting of them, as birds flying, so will the Lord defend Jerusalem*; that is, swiftly, 2.

as a bird flies full speed to her nest when she perceives her young is in danger; *in avenging them* of her enemies, *the zeal of the Lord shall perform it*; *in hearing their prayers*, he doth it with delight; in *forgiving their sins*, he is ready to forgive, multiplies to pardon; when they ask one Talent he gives them two. *Jacob* desires a safe egresse and regresse, he doth this, and more than he desired, for he brings him home with two bands; not the least mercy he gives, but he draws forth his soul and heart with it; even in his afflicting providences, where he seems to shew least love, there his heart overflows with it. *What shall I do unto thee, O Ephraim? my bowels are turned within me. Thirdly*, He is a good pay-master for his peoples zeal, *Heb.* 11. 6. *He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Never did fervent prayer find cold welcom with him. *Eliah* his prayer fetch'd fire from heaven, because it carried fire to heaven; the *Tribe* of *Levi* for their zeal were preferred to the Priesthood, and why? surely they who were so zealous in doing justice on their brethren, would be no lesse zealous in making attonement for them by their sacrifices. Most men lose the fervency and strength of their desires by misplacing them, they are zealous for such things as cannot, and persons that oft will not pay them for their pains: O how hot is the covetous man in his chace after the worlds pelf! *he pants after the dust of the earth*, and that *upon the heads of the poor*; but what reward hath he for his labour? after all his getting, like the dogs in pursuit of the hare, he misseth his game, and at last goes often poor and supperlesse to bed in his grave; to be sure, *he dies a fool*, *Jer.* 17. 11. How may many Court-Spaniels (that have fauned and flattered, yea, lickt up their Masters spittle, and ill for some scraps of preferment) have befool'd themselves, when at last they have seen their creeping sordid practices rewarded with the fatal stroke of the headsman, or a lingring consumptive death in their Princes favour? which made that ambitious *Cardinal* say too late, if he had been as observant of his heavenly Master as he had been of his earthly, he could not have been left so miserable at last. In a word, Do we not see the superstitious person knocking his breast, and cutting his own flesh, out of a zeal to his wooden god, that hath neither ear to hear, nor hand to help him? Now doth not the living God, thy loving Father, deserve thy zeal more than their dead and dumb idols do theirs?

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For shame let not us be cold in his worship, when the idolater sweats before his god of clouts; let not the worldlings zeal, in pursuit of his earthly Mammon, leave thee lagging behind with a heedlesse heartlesse serving of thy God; neither fear the worlds hooting at thee for thy zeal, they think thee a fool, but thou knowest them to be so.

CHAP. VI.

Something laid down by way of help, to raise our affections in Prayer.

BUT how may we get this fervency of spirit in prayer? *Quest.*

Thou who propoundest the question art a Saint or not; if not, there is another Question must precede this, How thou, that art at present in a state of spiritual death, maist have life? there must be life in the soul before there can be life in the duty. All the Rugs in the Upholsters shop will not fetch a dead man to warmth, nor any arguments, though taken from the most moving Topicks in the Scripture, will make thee pray fervently, while thy soul lies in a dead state. Go first to Christ that thou maist have life, and having life, then there is hope to chafe thee into some heat. *Answ.* 1.

But secondly, If thou beest a Saint, it yet calls for thy utmost care to get, and when thou hast got, to keep thy soul in a kindly heat. As the stone cannot of it self mount up into the air, so the bird (though it can do this, yet) cannot stay there long, without some labour and motion with its wings. The Saints have a spark of heavenly fire in their bosom, but this needs the bellows of their care and diligence to keep it alive. There is a rust that breeds from the gold, a worm from the wood, a moth from the garment, that in time waste them, and ashes from the coal that choaks the fire; yea, and in the Saint too, which will damp his 2.

zeal, if not cleared by daily watchfulneſſe. Obſerve therefore what is thy chief impediment to fervency in prayer, and ſet thy ſelf vigorouſly againſt it; if thou beeſt remiſſe in this precedaneous duty, thou wilt be much more remiſſe in prayer it ſelf. He that knows of a ſlough in the way, and mends it not before he takes his journey, hath no cauſe to wonder when his Chariot is laid faſt in it.

Now this is not the ſame in all, and therefore it is neceſſary that thou beeſt ſo much acquainted with thine own eſtate, as to know what is thy great clog in this duty. Certainly, were not the firmament of the Saints ſoul cooled with ſome malignant vapours, that ariſe from within his own breaſt, and weaken the force of divine grace in him, it would be Summer all the year long with him, his heart would be ever warm, and his affections lively in duty. Look therefore narrowly whence thy cooling comes; perhaps thy heart is too much let out upon the world in the day, and at night thy ſpirits are ſpent, when thou ſhouldſt come before the Lord in prayer. If thou wilt be hotter in duty, thou muſt be colder towards the world. A horſe that carrieth a pack all day, is unfit to go poſt at night; wood that hath the ſap in it will not eaſily burn; neither will thy heart readily take fire in holy duties, who comeſt ſo ſopt in the world to them; drain therefore thy heart of theſe eager affections to that; if thou meaneſt to have them warm and lively in this. Now no better way for this, than to ſet thy ſoul under the frequent meditation of Chriſts love to thee, thy relation to him, with the great and glorious things thou expecteſt from him in another world; this or nothing will dry up thy love to this world, as your wood which is laid a ſunning is made fit for the fire; whereas let your hearts continue ſoaking in the thoughts of an inordinate love to the world, and you will find when you come to pray, that thy heart will be in duty even as a ſoggy wet logg at the back of a fire, long in kindling, and ſoon out again. Haply the deadneſſe of thy heart in prayer, ariſeth from want of a deep ſenſe of thy wants, and the mercies thou deſireſt to have ſupplied. Couldſt thou but pray feelingly, no doubt but thou wouldſt pray fervently. The hungry man needs no help from art to learn him how to beg, his pinched bowels make him earneſt and eloquent. Is it pardon of ſin thou wouldſt pray for? firſt, ſee what anguiſh of

ſpirit

ſpirit they put thee to; do with thy ſoul as the Chyrurgeon with his patients wounds, who ſeringeth them with ſome ſharp ſearching water, to try what ſenſe he hath of them. Apply ſuch conſiderations to thy ſoul as may make thee feel their ſmart, and be ſenſible of thy deplored eſtate by reaſon of them; then go and ſleep at prayer if thou canſt. We have *David* firſt affecting his heart, and expreſſing the dolor of his ſoul for his ſin, *Pſal.* 38. *Mine iniquities are gone over my head as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me*; now when his heart is ſick with theſe thoughts, as one with ſtrong phyſick working in his ſtomack, he pours out his ſoul in prayer to God, *All my deſire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee, verſ.* 8. Art thou to pray for others? firſt, pierce thy heart through with their ſorrows, and by a ſpirit of ſympathy bring thy ſelf to feel their miſeries, as if thou wert in their caſe; then will thy heart be warm in prayer for them, when it flows from a heart melted in compaſſion to them; thus we read Chriſt troubled himſelf for *Lazarus*, before he lifted up his eyes to heaven for him, *Joh.* 11. 33--38. compared. Again, it may be thy want of zeal proceeds from a defect in thy faith, faith is the back of ſteel to the bowe of prayer, this ſends the arrow with a force to heaven; where faith is weak, the cry will not be ſtrong. He that goes about a buſineſſe with little hope to ſpeed, will do it but faintly, he works, as we ſay, for a dead horſe. 'Tis a true axiom, *Voluntas non fertur in impoſſibilia*, the leſſe we hope, the leſſe we endeavour. We read of ſtrong cries that Chriſt put up in the days of his fleſh, now mark what enforced his prayer, *unto him that was able to ſave him*; and not onely ſo, but if you look into that prayer to which this refers, you ſhall find he claſpt about God as his God, *My God, my God*; his hold on God held up his ſpirit in prayer. So in the ſeveral preſidents of praying Saints upon Scripture-record, you may ſee how the ſpirit of prayer eb'd and flow'd, fell and roſe as their faith was up and down. This made *David* preſſe ſo hard upon God in the day of his diſtreſſe, *I believed, therefore I ſpake, I was greatly afflicted, Pſal.* 116. This made the woman of *Canaan* ſo invincibly importunate, let Chriſt frown and chide, deny and rebuke her, ſhe yet makes her approaches nearer and nearer, gathering arguments from his very denials, as if a ſouldier ſhould ſhoot his enemies bullets back upon him again; and Chriſt tells us

what

what kept up her ſpirit undaunted, *Oh woman, great is thy faith!* *Laſtly*, May be it proceeds from ſome diſtate thou haſt given to the holy Spirit, who alone can blow up thy affections, and then no wonder thou art cold in prayer, when he is gone that ſhould keep thy heart warm at it. What is the body without the ſoul, but cold clay, dead earth? and what the ſoul without the ſpirit? truly no better. O invite him back to thy ſoul, or elſe thy praying-work is at an end; and if thou wouldſt perſwade him to return, obſerve what was the thing that diſtaſted him, and remove it; that which makes this Dove forſake its Lockyers, will hinder his return if not taken away.

CHAP. VII.

The third thing required to pray with our ſpirit, viz. Sincerity, wherein it conſiſts, and how neceſſary ſhewn.

3. THe third thing required to praying with our ſpirit, is Sincerity. There may be much fervour where there is little or no ſincerity; and this is ſtrange fire, the heat of a diſtemper, not the kindly natural heat of the new creature, which both comes from God, and acts for God; whereas the other is from ſelf, and ends in ſelf. Indeed the fire which ſelf kindles, ſerves onely to warm the mans own hands by it that makes it; *Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compaſſe about your ſelves with ſparks*, *Iſa.* 50. the Prophet repreſents them as ſitting down about the fire they had made. Self-acting and ſelf-aiming ever go together; therefore our Saviour with *ſpirit* requires *truth*, *Joh.* 4. 24. *He ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him as will worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth.*

Queſt. But wherein conſiſts this ſincere fervency?

Anſw. Zeal intends the affections, ſincerity directs their end, and con-

consists in their purity and incorruption: the blood is oft hot when none of the purest, and affections strong when the heart insincere; therefore the Apostle exhorts us, that *we love one another out of a pure mind fervently*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 22. and speaks in another place of *sorrowing after a godly sort*, that is, sincerely. Now the sincerity of the heart in prayer then appears, when a person is real in his prayers, and that from pure principles to pure ends.

1. First, When he is real in what he presents to God in prayer, the Index of his tongue without, and the Clock-work of his heart within go together; he doth not declaim against a sin with his lips, which he favours with his heart; he doth not make a loud cry for that grace, which he would be sorry to have granted him. This is the true badge of a hypocrite, who oft would be loth God should take him at his word; a dismal day it will be to such, when God shall bring in their own conscience to witnesse against them, that their hearts never signed and sealed the requests which they made. There is a State-policy used sometimes by Princes, to send Embassadors, and set Treaties on foot, when nothing lesse than Peace is intended; such a deceit is to be found in the false heart of man, to blind and cover secret purposes of war and rebellion against God, with fair overtures in prayer to him for peace.

2. Secondly, When the person is not onely real in what he desires, but this from a pure principle to a pure end. I doubt not but a hypocrite in confession may have a real trouble upon his spirit for his sins, and cordially, yea, passionately, desire his pardoning mercy, but not from a pure principle, a hatred of sin, but an abhorrency of wrath he sees hastning to him for it; not for a pure end, that the glory of Gods mercy may be magnified in and by him, but that himself may not be tormented by Gods just wrath. He may desire the graces of his Spirit, but not out of any love to them, but onely as an expedient, without which he knows to hell he must go; as a sick man in exquisite torture (suppose of the stone or some other acute disease) calls for some potion he loathes, because he knows he cannot have ease except he drinks it: Whereas the sincere soul desires grace, not onely as physick but food, he craves it not onely as necessary, but as sweet to his palate; the intrinsecal bonity and excellency of holinesse inflames him with such a love to it, that as one taken with the beauty of

a Virgin, saith, he will marry her, though he hath nothing with her but the cloaths to her back; so the sincere heart would have holinesse; though it brought no other advantages with it, than what is found in its own lovely nature. So much to shew what sincerity in prayer is.

Now he that would pray acceptably must pray thus in his spirit, that is, with the sincerity of his spirit; *The prayer of the upright is his delight.* *Nadab* and *Abihu* brought fire, and had fire, Levit. 10. 1. a strange fire to destroy them for the strange fire they offered; and such is all fervency and zeal, that is not taken from the altar of a sincere heart. *The fervent prayer* πολὺ ἰσχύει, it can do much, but it must be of a righteous man, and such the sincere man only is. And no wonder that God stands so much upon sincerity in prayer, seeing the lip of truth is so prized even among men; nature hath taught men to commend their words to others, by laying their hands on their breasts, as an assurance, that what they say or promise is true and cordial; which the penitent Publican it is like aimed at, *Luk.* 18. 13. *he smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner*, thereby declaring whence his sorrowful confession came. That light which told the Heathens that God must be worshipped, informed them also, this worship must come from the inward recesses of the heart; *In sancto quid facit aurum —— quin damus id superis, &c.* What care the gods for gold, let us offer that which is more worth than all treasures, *sanctos recessus animi*, the heart and inward affections of it. It is a strange custome, *Benzo* in his *historia novi orbis*, relates of the Natives there, *Indi occidentales dum sacra faciunt, dimisso in guttur bacillo, vomitum cient, ut Idolo ostendant, nihil se in pectore mali occultum gerere*: When worshipping their gods, they used, by putting a little stick down their throat to provoke them to vomit, thereby shewing their Idol, that they carried no secret evil within them. I should not have named this barbarous custom, but to shew how deeply this notion is engraven in the natural conscience, That we must be sincere in the worship of God.

Use. Let it put us upon the Trial, whether we thus pray in the spirit, whether you can find sincerity stampt on your fervency; if the prayer be not fervent it cannot be sincere, but it may have a fervour without this. This is a very fine *five*, approve thy self here,

here, and thou maiſt without preſumption write thy ſelf a Saint; but how fervent ſoever thou art without ſincerity, it matters not; nay, zeal without uprightneſſe is worſe than key-cold; none will go to hell with more ſhame than the falſe-hearted zealot, who mounts up towards heaven in the fiery chariot, a ſeeming zeal, but at laſt is found a devil in *Samuel's* mantle, and ſo is thrown down like lightning from heaven, whether he would have been thought by his neighbours to be going. Be not loth to be ſearch'd, there will then need no further ſearch to prove thee unſound; if Gods Officer be denied entrance, all is not right within. Now to help thee in the work, enquire,

CHAP. VIII.

Rules laid down for tryal of the ſincerity of our hearts in Prayer, with a help or two towards the getting this grace.

SECT. I.

FIrſt, What is thy care in performing this duty of Prayer in ſecret? if thy heart be ſincere, it will delight in privacy. A falſe heart calls others to ſee his zeal for God. May be he is forward to put himſelf upon duty where he hath ſpectators to applaud him, and can be very hot and earneſt at the work; but either he is wholly a ſtranger to ſecret prayer, or elſe he is cold in the performance; he finds himſelf becalmed now he wants the breath of others to fill his ſails. The plummets are off which quickned his motion, and he moves heavily to what he did before company. Whereas a ſincere Chriſtian never finds more freedom of ſpirit, and liquifactions of ſoul, than in his ſolitary

addresses to God. *Joseph*, when he would give full vent to his passion, sought some secret place where to weep, and therefore retired himself into his chamber, *Gen.* 43. so the sincere Christian goes to his closset, and there easeth his heart into the bosom of God, and lets his passions of sorrow for sin, and love to Christ, burst forth and have their full scope, which in publick prayer he restrains (as to the outward expression of them) out of a holy modesty, and fear of being observed by others, which he hunts not for. Now speak, Christian, what is thy temper? can thy closset witnesse for thee in this particular? It is the trick of a hypocrite to strein himself to the utmost in duty, when he hath spectators, and to draw loose in his gears when alone; like some that carry their best meat to market, and save the worst for their own food at home; and others that draw their best wine to their customers, but drink the dead and flat themselves at their own private table.

2. Secondly, Observe thy self in thy more publick addresses to the throne of grace, and that in two particulars; *first*, when thou prayest before others; *secondly*, when thou joynest with others that pray. *First*, When thou prayest before others; observe on what thou bestowest thy chief care and zeal, whether in the externals or internals of prayer that which is exposed to the eye and ear of men, or that which should be prepared for the eye and ear of God, the devout posture of thy body, or the inward devotion of thy soul; the pomp of thy words, or the power of thy faith; the agitation of thy bodily spirits in the vehemency of thy voice, or the fervency of thy spirit in heart-breaking affections. These inward workings of the soul in prayer are the very soul of prayer, and all the care about the other without this, is like the trimming bestowed upon a dead body, that will not make the carcase sweet, nor these thy prayer to Gods nostrils. It is the faith, love, brokennesse of heart for sin, and the inward affections exerted in prayer, that like *Elijah* in his fiery chariot mount up to God in the heavens, while the other with the *Prophets* mantle fall to the ground. The sincere soul dares not be rude in his outward posture, he is careful of his very words and phrase, that they be grave and pertinent, neither would he pray them asleep that joyns with him, by a cold, dreaming, and lazy manner of delivering of it; but still it is the inward disposition of his heart he principally looks

looks to, knowing well, that by the other he is but cook to others, and may fall himself, if his own heart be idle in the duty; and therefore he doth not count he prays well (though to the affecting of their hearts) except he finds his own affections drawn out in the duty. Whereas the hypocrite, if he may but come off the duty with the applause of others in the external performance, is very well pleased, though he be conscious of the deadness naughtiness of his own heart therein. *Secondly*, When thou joynest with another that prayeth. Do the gifts and graces that breathe from others in prayer, warm thy affections, and draw out thy soul to bear them company to heaven in the petitions they put up? or do they stir up a secret envying and repining at the gifts of God bestowed on them? This would discover much pride and unsoundness in thy spirit. The hypocrite is proud, and thinks all the water is spilt and lost that runs besides his own mill: whereas the sincere soul prizeth the gifts of others, can heartily bless God for them, and make a humble and holy use of them; his heart is as much affected with the holy savoury requests that another puts up, as when they come out of his own mouth. But the hypocrites eye is evil, because Gods is good.

Sect. II.

OBserve whether thy fervency in prayer be uniform; a false heart may seem very hot in praying against one sin, but he can skip over another, and either leave it out of his confession, or handles it very gently, as a partial witness, that would fain save the prisoners life he comes against, will not speak all he knows, but minceth his evidence; thus doth the hypocrite deal with his darling lust, he is like one that mows grasse with a gapt sythe, some he cuts down, and other he leaves standing; vehement against this, and favourable to that lust; whereas sincerity makes clear work as it goes. *Order my steps in thy word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me, Psal.* 119. 132. *Again*, The false heart is as uneven in his petitions as in his deprecations, very earnest he is for some mercies, and they are commonly of an inferiour nature, but more indifferent in his desires for those that are greater; he tythes mint and cumin in his prayers,

(temporal mercies I mean) but neglects the weightier things of the promise, the sanctifying graces of the Spirit, humility, heavenly-mindedness, contentation, self-denial; a little of these upon a knifes point will content him.

4. Fourthly, Observe whether thy endeavours correspond with thy prayers; the false heart seems hot in prayer, but you will find him cold enough at work; he prays very fiercely against his sins, as if he desired them to be all slain upon the place; but what doth he towards the speeding of them with his own hands? doth he set himself upon the work of mortification? doth he withdraw the fuel that feeds them? is he careful to shun occasions that may ensnare him? when temptations come, do they find him in arms upon his guard, resolved to resist their motion? Alas, no such matter; if a few good words in prayer will do the work, well and good, but as for any more, he is too lazy to go about it. Where as the sincere heart is not idle after prayer, when it hath given heaven the allarm, and called God in to his help, then he takes the field himself, and oppoſeth his lusts with all his might, watching their motions, and taking every advantage he meets with to fall upon them, every mercy he receives he beats it out into a weapon to knock down all thoughts of sinning again. Thus *Ezr. chap. 9 Seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments?* O God, forbid, saith the holy soul, that he should bid such a thought welcom, every promise he reads, he lifts it up as a sword for his defence against this enemy, *Having these promises, let us cleanse our selves, 2 Cor. 7. 1.*

I shall shut up this head with a few directions how we may get this sincere heart in prayer.

SECT. III.

1. FIrst, Get thy heart united by faith to Christ; it is faith that purifies the heart from its false principles and ends in duty. God made man upright, and while he stood so, his eye and foot went right, neither did his eye look, or his foot tread awrie; but after *Eve* had talked with the Serpent, she and all mankind after

after her learnt the Serpents crooked motion, to look one way, and go another; *God made man upright, but they sought out many inventions*, *Eccles.* 7.29. O beg therefore with *David*, that God would *renew a right spirit within thee*, *Psal.* 51. what the evil spirit hath perverted, the holy Spirit alone can set right. If the cause why a Piece carries wrong, be in its make and mold, it must be new cast, or it will never carry right. Hypocrisie in duty comes from the falsness of mans depraved nature, the heart therefore must be made new before it can be sincere. The new heart is the single heart, *Ezek.* 11.19. *I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you.* He that loves truth in the inward parts, can put it there.

Secondly, Make hypocrisie in prayer appear as odious to thee as possibly thou canst, and thou needest not dresse it up in any other than its own cloathes to do this. Consider but how grievous a sin, and how great a folly it is, and me-thinks it were enough to set thee against it. *First*, Consider what a grievous sin it is. A lie spoken by one man to another, is a sin capable of high aggravations; what then is that lie which is uttered in prayer to God? surely this must be much more horrid, for here is blasphemy in the untruth. God spares not to give the hypocrite the lie, *Hos.* 11.12. *Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit*; so many lies they told to God, as prayers they put up. O the patience of a God, that doth not strike the hypocrite dead upon the place, while the lie is in his throat, as he did *Ananias* and *Saphira*. *Secondly*, It is a great folly; *first*, as it is infeaceable. Who but a fool can think to blind the eyes of the Almighty? canst thou cover the eye of the Sun with thy hand or hat, that it shall not shine? as unable art thou to hide thy secret designs so close, that the great God should not see them. *Secondly*, As it is impossible to deceive God, so thou putteſt a woful cheat upon thy self; thou thinkest thou mendest the matter by praying, and thou makest it worse; when thou comest on thy trial for thy life, thy hypocrisie in prayer will cost thee dearer than thy other sins; thou takest pains to encrease thy condemnation, thou dost as *Solomon* saith of another kind of hypocrite, *Prov.* 1.17. *lay wait for thy own blood*, *and lurk privily for thy own life*. Of all sinners, the hypocrite hath the precedency in Gods purposes and preparations of wrath; hell is prepared for them 2.

them as the first-born of damnation, *Matth.* 24. 51. other sinners are said to have *their portion with hypocrites*, as the younger brethren with their elder who is the heir.

Thirdly, Crucifie thy affections to the world. Hypocrisie in Religion springs from the bitter root of some carnal affection unmortifi'd. So long as thy prey lies below, thy eye will be to the earth, even when thou seemest like an Eagle to mount in thy prayers to heaven. The false heart does *uti Deo ut fruatur mundo*, he useth Religion for secular ends, and makes his seeming piety to God but as a horsing-block to get into the creatures saddle; God is in his mouth, but the world is in his heart, which he projects to attain more easily by the reputation that this will gain him. I have read of one that offered his Prince a great sum of mony for no more, but to have leave once or twice a day to come into his presence, and onely say, *God save your Majesty*; the Prince wondring at his large offer for so small a favour, asked him, What this would advantage him? O Sir, saith he, this, though I have nothing else at your hands, will get me a name in the Country for one that is a great favourite at Court, and such an opinion will help me to more by the years end, than I am out for the purchase. Thus some (it is to be feared) by the very name which they get for great Saints among their neighbours, from their acquaintance with Religious duties, do facilitate their carnal projects, and advance their worldly intereſt that lie at the bottom of all their goodly profession. Well, Christian, this is but to play at small game; to fish for any of this worlds petty enjoyments with religions golden hook. As thou loveſt thy soul, and wouldſt not lose this for ever, to get that which thou must lose after thou hast got it, mortifie those carnal affections which thou findeſt most likely to withdraw thy heart from God. Thou knoweſt not God, if thou seeſt not enough in him to make thee happy without the worlds contributions; this throughly believed will make thee sincere in his service. *I am God almighty, walk before me and be thou perfect*, said God to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 1.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Sheweth, the acceptable prayer is that which is in the Spirit, and what is required to pray in the holy Ghost.

HAving dispatch'd the first importance of this phrase, *Praying in the Spirit*, *viz.* the spirit of the person that prayeth, and shewn, that then a person prays in the Spirit, when his own soul and spirit acts in the duty, when he prays with understanding, fervency, and sincerity. Now we proceed to the second importance of the phrase, To pray in the spirit is to pray in or with the Spirit of God, *Jude vers.* 20. *Praying in the holy Ghost.* So that the Note to be insisted on, will be this,

That to right praying it is necessary, that we pray in or by the Spirit of God. Prayer it is the creatures act, but the Spirits gift. There is a concurrence both of the Spirit of God, and the soul or spirit of the Christian to the performance of it. Hence we find both the holy Spirit is said to pray in us, *Rom.* 8. 26. and we said to pray in him, *Jude vers.* 20. By the first is meant his inspiration, whereby he excites and assists the creature to and in the work; by the latter the concurrence of the Saints faculties. The Spirit doth not so pray in him, as that the Christian doth not exercise his own faculties in the duties, as the *Famulists* fondly conceive. In handling this point I shall endeavour to do these three things. *Note.*

First, I shall assert the point, and prove the truth of it. 1.

Secondly, Explicate what it is to pray by the Spirit of God. 2.

Thirdly, Make some Application of the point. 3.

SECT.

Sect. I.

I. First, To assert the truth of the point, that to right praying it is necessary we pray by the Spirit of God; this is clear from *Ephes.* 2. 18. *Through him we both have an accesse by one spirit unto the Father*; mark those words, by one Spirit. As there is but one Mediator to appear and pray for us in heaven, so but one Spirit that can pray in us, and we by it, on earth. We may as well venture to come to to the Father through another Mediator than his Son, as pray by another Spirit than by the holy Ghost. Therefore our Saviour, when he would shew his dislike of the Disciples rash motion, he doth it by telling them, *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of*, *Luk.* 9. 55. as if he had said, it behoves you to be well acquainted with the Spirit that acts you in prayer, if your praiers be not breathed in and out by my holy Spirit, they are abominable to Me and my Father also. The Name of Christ is not more necessarie, than the Spirit of Christ is in prayer; Christs Name fits onelie the Spirits mouth, it is too great a word for any to speak as he ought, that hath not the Spirit to help him: *None can say Jesus is the Lord, but by the holy Ghost*, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. One may say the words, without any special work of the Spirit in him, and so may a Parrot; but to say Christ is Lord believinglie, with thoughts and affections comporting with the greatnesse and sweetnesse thereof, requires the Spirit of God to be in his heart and tongue. Now it is not the bare naming Christ in prayer, and saying, For the Lords sake, that procures our welcome with God, but saying it in faith, and none can do this without the Spirit. Christ is the door that opens into Gods presence, and lets the soul into his very bosom, faith is the key that unlocks the dore; but the Spirit is he that both makes this key, and helps the Christian to turn it in prayer, so as to get any accesse to God. You know in the Law it was a sin, not onely to offer *strange incense*, but also to bring *strange fire*, *Levit.* 10. 1. by the incense, which was a composition of sweet spices, appointed by God to be burnt as a sweet perfume in his nostrils, was signified the merit and satisfaction of Christ, who being bruised by his Fathers wrath, did offer up himselfa sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. By the fire that was put to the incense (which

(which also was appointed to be taken from the Altar, and not any common hearth) was signified the Spirit of God, by which we are to offer up all our prayers and praises, even as Christ offered himself up by the eternal Spirit. To plead Christs merits in prayer, and not by the Spirit, is to bring right incense, but strange fire, and so our prayers are but smoak, offensive to his pure eyes, not incense, a sweet savour to his nostrils.

SECT. II.

SEcondly, I proceed to explicate what it is to pray by the Spirit of God. To the better opening of this, we must know, there are two ways that the Spirit of God helps persons in prayer, one way is by his Gifts, the other by his Grace. 2.

First, The Spirit of God helps in prayer by his Gifts; now those gifts which he furnisheth a person with for prayer, are either Extraordinary or Ordinary; the Extraordinary gifts of the Spirit in prayer were in the Primitive times shed forth, whereby the *Apostles* and others were able in a miraculous manner to pray as well as preach on a suddain, in a language that they never had learnt: Of this gift, Interpreters understand that passage of *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. *I will pray with the Spirit, and with understanding also*; that is, He would make use of this extraordinary gift Christ had furnish'd him with, but so as he might edifie the Church by it, and no otherwise. This extraordinary gift was fitted for the infancy of the Gospel-Church, and ceased (as others of the like nature did) with it. The Ordinary gift of the Spirit in prayer is that special faculty whereby persons are enabled on a suddain to form the conceptions of their minds, and desires of their hearts, into apt words before the Lord in prayer; this is a common gift, and is bestowed very oft on those that are none of the best men; the hypocrite may have more of this gift than some sincere Christian. It is a gift that commonly bears proportion to natural endowments, a ready apprehension, fruitful phancy, voluble tongue, and audacity of spirit, which are all gifts of the Spirit, and do dispose a person for this. Now we see that the head may be ripe, and the heart rotten; and on the contrary, the heart sound and sincere, where the head is low-parted. 1.

Secondly, The Spirit helps in prayer by his grace. His gifts help to the outward expreſſion, but his grace to the inward affection. By the gifts of the Spirit a perſon is enabled to take the ear, and affect the heart of men that hear him; but by the grace of the Spirit acting a ſoul in prayer, he is enabled to move his own heart, and the heart of God alſo; and this is the man that indeed prays in the Spirit, the other hath the *gift*, but this hath the *ſpirit of prayer*.

Now there is a two-fold grace neceſſary to pray thus in the ſpirit; *firſt*, grace from the Spirit to ſanctifie the perſon that prays; *ſecondly*, grace to act and aſſiſt this perſon ſanctified in prayer. By the firſt, the Spirit dwells in the ſoul; by the ſecond, he acts the ſoul.

1. Firſt, There is neceſſary to this praying in the Spirit, grace to ſanctifie the perſon. Before the creature is renewed and ſanctified by the holy Ghoſt, it can neither apprehend nor deſire things aright; *The carnal mind perceives not the things of God, nay, it is enmity to God*: and how is ſuch a one fit to pray in an acceptable manner? Firſt then, the Spirit renews the creature, by infuſing thoſe ſupernatural qualities, or habits of his ſaving ſanctifying graces, which makes him a new creature; by theſe he comes to dwell and live in him, and then he acts his own graces thus infuſed. The ſoul is in the body before it acts and moves it; we read of *living in the ſpirit*, and *walking in the ſpirit*, *Gal.* 5. 25. *If we live in the ſpirit, let us walk in the ſpirit*; walking ſuppoſeth life. To pray, hear, or perform any other holy action in a holy manner, is to walk in the Spirit; but we muſt live in the Spirit, or the Spirit live in us (which is all one) before we can thus walk in the Spirit. There are ſome acts indeed the Spirit of God puts forth upon ſouls, that are not thus ſanctified, acts of common illumination, reſtraining grace, and aſſiſting alſo; thus many hypocrites are enabled to pray in excellent expreſſions, but he never did aſſiſt hypocrite, or any unſactified perſon, to perform the inward part of prayer, to mourn ſincerely for ſin, to pant after Chriſt and his grace, or to cry, *Abba Father*, believingly; theſe are vital acts of the new creature, and flow from a ſpirit of grace infuſed into the ſoul, from which follows this *ſpirit of ſupplication*, *Zech.* 12. 10.

2. Secondly, As habitual grace is required to ſanctifie the perſon, ſo actual grace to aſſiſt him as oft as he prays. The Spirit of God may

may dwell in a soul by his habitual grace, yet deny actual assistance to this or that particular duty; and then the poor Christian is becalmed, as a ship at sea when no wind is stirring. For as grace cannot evidence it self, so neither can it act it self. Hence it is, that sometimes the Saints prayers speed no better, because he is not acted by the Spirit in it. *Sampson* when his lock was cut, was weak like another man; a Saint, when the Spirit of God denies his help, prays no better than a carnal man. The Spirit of God is a free Agent, *Uphold me* (saith *David*) *with thy free Spirit*, *Psal.* 51. He is not as a prisoner tyed to the Oar, that must needs work when we will have him; but as a Prince, when he pleaseth he comes forth and shews himself to the soul, and when he pleaseth he retires and will not be seen. What freer than the wind? not the greatest King on earth can command it to rise for his pleasure, to this the Spirit of God is compared, *Joh.* 4. He is not onely free to breathe where he lists, in this soul, and not in that, but when he pleaseth also.

CHAP. X.

Sheweth what assistance the holy Ghost gives a Saint in prayer, more than any other person.

BUt the question will here be, What assistance doth the Spirit of God give a Saint in prayer more than another person? *Quest.*

First, In general: The assistance which the Spirit of God gives a Saint in prayer above another, lies deep, it is laid out upon the inward man, and inward part of the duty. So that a person may come to know whether himself prays in the Spirit, but he cannot judge so easily of another. Now this special assistance consists in these three particulars. *Answ.*

First, The Spirit puts forth an act of exuscitation upon the soul, to stir up his affections; never was any formal prayer of the holy 1.

Spirits making, when the Spirit comes, it is a time of life; the Christians affections spring in his bosom at his voice, as the *Babe* in *Elizabeth* at the salutation of the *Virgin Mary*, or as the strings under the Musicians hand stir and speak harmoniously, so doth all the Saints affections at the secret touch of the Spirit. He excites the Saints fear, filling it with such a sense of Gods greatness, his own nothingness and baseness, as makes him with awful thoughts reverence the divine Majesty he speaks unto, and deliver every petition with a holy trembling upon his spirit. Such a fear was upon *Abrahams* spirit, when in his prayer for *Sodom* he expressed how great an adventure he made, being but *dust and ashes, to take upon him to speak unto the Lord.* He excites the Christians mourning affections, by his divine breath he raiseth the clouds of the Saints past sins, and when he hath overspread his soul in meditation with the sad remembrance of them, then in prayer he melts the cloud, and dissolves his heart into soft showers of Evangelical mourning; that the Christian sighs and groans, weeps and mourns like a child that is beaten, though he sees the rod laid out of his heavenly Fathers hand, and fears no wrath from him for them. The *Apostle* tells us, the groans and sighs which the Spirit helps the Saint to, are such as *cannot be uttered*, *Rom.* 8. 26. no, not by the Saint himself, who being unable to translate the inward grief he conceives into words, is fain sometimes to send it with this inarticulate voice to heaven, yet a voice that is well understood there, and more musical in Gods ear than the most ravishing musick can be to ours. In a word, he stirs up affections suitable to every part of prayer, enabling the gracious soul to confesse sin with an aking heart, as if he felt so many swords raking in it; to supplicate mercy and grace, as with inward feeling of his wants, so with vehement desires to have them satisfied; and to praise God with a heart enlarged and carried on high upon the wings of love and joy. Parts may art it in the phrase and composure of the words, (as a Statuary may carve a goodly Image, with all the outward lineaments, and beautiful proportions in every part) but still it is but the counterfeit and image of a true prayer, for want of that *aliquid intus* which should give life and energy to it. This the Spirit of God alone can effect.

2. Secondly, As the Spirit of God doth excite the Christians affections in prayer, so he regulates and directs them. Who indeed but

but the Spirit of God can guide and rein these fiery steeds? He is said in this respect *to help our infirmities, for We know not what to pray for as We ought, Rom.* 8. 26. We alas are prone to over-bend the bowe in some petitions, and want strength to bend it enough in some other; one while we over-shoot the Butt, praying absolutely for that which we should ask conditionally; another time we shoot beside the mark, either by praying for what God hath not promised, or too selvishly that which is promised. Now the Spirit helps the Christians infirmity in this respect, for *he maketh intercession for the Saints according to the will of God, vers.* 27. that is, he so holds the reins of their affections, and directs them, that they keep their right way and due order, not flying out into unwarrantable heats, and inordinate desires. He by his secret whispers instructs them, when to let out their affections full speed, and when to take them up again; he teacheth them the law of prayer, that striving lawfully they may not lose the prize. Just as the *Spirit* was in the *living creatures* to direct their motion, of whom it is said, *They went every one streight forward, whether the Spirit was to go they went, and turned not when they went, Ezek.* 1. 12. So the Spirit acting his Saints in prayer, keeps them that they lash out neither on this hand nor on that, but go streight forward, and draw their requests by his rule.

Thirdly, He fills the Christian with a holy confidence and humble boldnesse in prayer. Sin makes the face of God dreadful to the sinner, guilty *Adam* shuns his presence, and tells the reason, *I heard thy voice, and was afraid.* If the *Patriarchs* (being conscious how barbarously they had used their brother *Joseph*) were terrified at his presence, and so abashed that they could not answer him; how much more confounded must the sinner be, to draw near to the great God, when he remembers the horrid sins he hath perpetrated against him? Now the Spirit easeth the Christians heart of this fear, assuring him, that Gods heart meditates no revenge upon him, but freely forgives what wrong he hath done him; yea, which is more, that he takes him for his dear child, and that the Christian may not stand in doubt thereof, he seals it with a kisse of love upon his heart, leaving there the impression of Gods Fatherly love fairly stamped, whereby the Christian comes to have amiable thoughts of God, is able to call God Father, and expect the kind welcome of a child at his hands. 3.

This

This is the Spirit of Adoption which the *Apostle* speaks of, *Rom.* 8. 15. that chaseth away all servile fear and dread of God from the soul, *Ye have not received again the spirit of bondage to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father.* And, *Gal* 4. 6. *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.*

CHAP. XI.

A reproof to those that make a mock of having the Spirit, *and praying by the* Spirit; *also a trial whether we have the* Spirit *or no.*

SECT. I.

Use. FIrst, Take heed of blaspheming the holy Spirit, as to this work of his in his Saints. Some are so desperately prophane, that they dare flout and jeer at those who shew any strictnesse in their lives, or zeal in the worship of God, especially in this duty of prayer, with this, These are they that have the Spirit, that pray (forsooth) by the Spirit; nay more, (I tremble to speak it) some have called their praying by the Spirit, praying by the devil. That every gracious soul hath the Spirit of God dwelling in him, the Scripture tells us, *Rom.* 8 9. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* That God hath promised his Spirit to help his Saints in prayer, is undeniable, and that he accepts no prayer but what is put up by his Spirit, is as sure. Now mayst thou not know, bold wretch, what Spirit thou art acted by, who makest a mock of having the Spirit, and praying by the Spirit? who but the devil would set thee on work to blaspheme the Spirit of God? But why should we wonder, that the actings of the holy Spirit in the Saints should be thus

be thus scorn'd and blasphemed, seeing we find that the Spirit of God, working so mightily in Christ himself, was maliciously interpreted by the wicked *Pharisees* to be from the devil? *Matth.* 12. 24. But let such know to their terror, that to make a jeer of the Spirit, or to attribute his works to the devil, if it be maliciously done, will be found to come near that blasphemy of the Spirit which is unpardonable; see *verf.* 32. *Whosoever shall speak a word against the holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him in this world, neither in the world to come.* And this our Saviour speak upon their attributing what he did by the Spirit of God to the spirit of the devil.

Sect. II.

2. SEcondly, Try whether you have the Spirit of God or no. A prayerless state is a sad state to live in. Now thou canst not pray acceptably except thou prayest in the Spirit, and thou canst not pray in the Spirit except thou hast the Spirit in thee.

Quest. But how may I know whether I have the Spirit of God or no?

Answ. *First*, I shall answer negatively by what thou must not conclude that thou hast the Spirit. *Secondly*, Affirmatively, by what thou maist.

1. First, *Negatively*, not because thou hast now and then some good motions from the holy Spirit stirred in thee; the evil spirit is found oft stirring evil motions in souls, where he doth not dwell, a foul stir he makes oft in the bosom of a Saint, yet dwells not there, because he is not there, *per modum quietis, he finds no rest in these dry places*, therefore he is brought in, saying, *I will return to my house*, *viz.* to those that are yet in a carnal state, where he can rule the rost, and command as a Master doth all in his house. Truly thus, the holy Spirit is often moving in the consciences and affections of carnal creatures, counselling, rebuking, and exciting them; so that upon his suggestions, some flashy short hangs of affections are raised in them to that which is good, but presently all is quasht and comes to nothing, and the Spirit driven away by the churlish entertainment he finds.

Secondly, Not by the common gifts of the Spirit, illumination, conviction,

conviction, restraining grace, and assistance to perform the external part of Religious duties, even to the admiration sometimes of others that hear them; these are gifts of the Spirit, but such as do not prove he hath the spirit that hath them; they are like the brightnesse or radiancy which we see the clouds gilt with in the morning before the body of the Sun is above the Horizon, they shew the Sun is near, but it is not yet risen for all this radiancy that is seen; so these gifts are beamed from the Spirit of God, and shew the Kingdom of God is come nigh such a one; but they do not demonstrate that the Spirit of God is come into that soul, and hath taken possession of it for his house and Temple; or they are like the tokens which a suitor sends to a person whom he is wooing to be his wife (the more to insinuate upon her) but the match breaking off, all are required again. Many have these gifts sent them by the Spirit of God, with whom the Match betwixt Christ and them was never made up, and if they be not called for back in this life, they shall however be accountable for them at the great Day.

Sect. III.

2. SEcondly, *Affirmatively*, by what thou maist conclude that thou hast the Spirit of God, and that in two particulars; though here I might multiply,

1. *First*, If thou beest regenerated by the Spirit. The Spirit of God dwells onely in a new creature. So long as a man continues in his carnal natural state, he is destitute of the Spirit. *Sensual, having not the Spirit, Jude vers.* 19. the word is ψύχικοι, such as have no more but a reasonable soul, without a higher principle of life than nature gives to all men. St. *Paul* useth the word to set out a man in his meer naturals, as opposed to another that hath a principle of supernatural life from the Spirit of God, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. ψύχικος ἀνὴρ, *the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit.* But here the Question will be, How shall I know I am regenerate? To this I answer, Every regenerate soul hath *divinam indolem*, a divine nature and disposition, like unto the Spirit of God that regenerates him, *Joh.* 3. 6. *That which is born of the Spirit is spirit, viz.* is spiritual, the abstract being put for the concrete

concrete to encreaſe the force of the words. He hath a ſoul raiſed as far above natural men, as they are above the nature of beaſt. When *Nebuchadnezzar* had the underſtanding of a man given him, he graſed no longer among the beaſts of the field, but returned to his Princely Throne and life. Thus the regenerate ſoul returns to that high and heavenly diſpoſition, which man in his primitive holy ſtate once had; now God, and the things of God take up his thoughts, he hath a new eye to ſee vanity, where before he placed felicity; a new guſt and taſte, which makes him ſpit out thoſe ſinful pleaſures as poiſon, that once were his pleaſant morſels, and count all earthly enjoyments, that before were his onely feaſt, but dung and droſſe in compariſon of Chriſt and his grace; he can no more make a meal on them, than a man can with dogs meat. *Rom.* 8. 5. *They that are after the fleſh do mind the things of the fleſh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit*; φρονοῦσιν, they do *ſapere*, ſavour the things of the Spirit. Find therefore what thy guſt is, and thou maiſt know what thy life is, whether ſpiritual or natural.

Secondly, If thou beeſt led by the Spirit. The Spirit is the Saints guide, *Rom.* 8. 14. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the ſons of God.* As the ſoul is in the body to direct and move it, ſo is the Spirit in their ſoul, *Thou haſt holden me by my right hand, Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel* (ſaith *David*) *Pſal.* 73. 23, 24. Even as the child is led by his fathers hand, ſo the Saint by the manuduction of the Spirit. Now to be led by the Spirit of God, imports theſe three things. *Firſt*, A ſence of our own weakneſſe and ignorance. He that thinks he knows his way, or that he is able to direct his own ſteps, will not accept of a guide; it is the weak child, or the blind man, that calls to be led: firſt, *Saul* was ſtruck blind, and then he gives his hand to be led to *Damaſcus Act.* 9. Enquire therefore whether God hath made thee ſenſible of thy own ignorance and impotency. Man by nature is proud and ſelf-conceited, he leans much to his own underſtanding, and ſtands upon his own ſtrength, very loath to be thought out of the way, or unable to go of himſelf in it; *The wiſe feareth and departeth from evil, but the fool rageth and is confident, Prov.* 14. 16. Tell a ſoul ſpiritually wiſe he is out of his way, he fears himſelf, hearkens to the counſel, and turns back; but a fool (and ſuch is every carnal man) he falls out with him that counſels or

reproves him, and is confident he is right, as if he knew the way to heaven as well as he doth the way from his house to the market. The first thing that the Spirit doth is, to dismount the soul from this high opinion he hath of himself, thereby to make him teachable and tractable. *Men and brethren* (say those Converts, after God with one prick in their hearts had let out this wind of pride) *what shall we do? Act.* 2. 37. their spirit now comes down, willing they are to be directed, so meek and humble that a child may lead them. *Secondly*, He that is led by another, is ruled and determined by him that is his guide which way he should go. Enquire therefore whether the Spirit of God doth thus determine thy soul in its actings and motions; if thou beest led by the Spirit, thou walkest after the Spirit, and goest the way he goes. Now you know which is the Spirits walk, he is a Spirit of truth, and leads into truth, the Word of God is the road he he keeps, if thou walkest not by this rule he is not thy guide. Speak therefore, what authority and sway bears the Word with thee? dost thou consult with it, and hearken to it? or is it to thee as *Micajah* was to *Ahab*, art thou afraid to advise with it? or when thou dost, canst thou cast its counsel at thy heels, and venture to break its hedge to pursue thy ambitious or covetous projects? if a word lying in thy way will not stop thee, thou art not led by the Spirit of God thou maist be sure. *Lastly*, To be led imports spontaniety and willingnesse; this is the difference betwixt leading and driving: The carnal heart may be driven by the rebukes and convictions of the Spirit, as a beast by switch and spur; but the gracious soul follows the Spirit, as a child his father that holds him by the hand, yea, that cries after his father to take him along with him. *Where the Spirit is, there is liberty.* The Spirit indeed *draws*, but then the soul *runs after him*. *Mary* chose the better part; it was not imposed on her against her liking. The obedience of the Saints is compared to a sacrifice, *Rom.* 12. 2. *present your bodies a living sacrifice, &c.* and it is no acceptable sacrifice that is not offered willingly. The Spirit of God makes the soul willing in the day of his power. *I will go with this man* (said *Rebeccah*) she was as willing to have *Isaac* as he to have her. The gracious soul answers the Spirits call, as the eccho the voice, *Seek my face, Thy face will I seek.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

An Exhortation to them that at present want the Spirit of grace and prayer, with some directions how to obtain it.

NOw this use of Trial calls for a double word of Exhortation: *First*, To those that upon examination find they are destitute of the Spirit. *Secondly*, To those that by the rules of trial find the Spirit of God is in them.

SECT. I.

FIrst, To you that are yet without the Spirit of God, O labour to get this heavenly guest to come and dwell in your hearts. Better it were thou hadst not the spirit of a man, than to want the Spirit of God. If the holy Spirit be not in thee, assure thy self the evil spirit is; and no way is there for thee to turn this troublesom guest out of doors, but by getting the Spirit of God in. Thou maist know where thy eternal mansion will be in heaven or hell hereafter, by the Spirit that fills and acts thy soul here; if God takes not up thy soul as a mansion for his Spirit on earth, it shews that he prepares no mansion for thy soul in heaven, but leaves thee to be entertained by him in the other world that is thy guest in this. Thus thou seest how thy soul hangs over the infernal pit; what course canst thou take to prevent this thy endless misery that is coming upon thee? wilt thou stand up as *Haman* to make request for the life of thy soul? Alas, thou canst not pray though thy life lies on't, thou wantest the Spirit of God that should help thee to groans and sighs; thou must live before thou canst breathe. Prayer you see is not a work of nature, but a gift of grace; not a matter of will and

parts, got by human skill and art, but taught and inspired by the holy Ghost. At the Bar of man, the Orators tongue may so smooth over a cause as to carry it, Rhetorick hath a kind of spell in it that charms the ears of men, *Isa.* 3. 3. he is called, *The eloquent Orator*, נבון לחש. he that is skilfull in a charm: thus *Abigail* charmed *David's* passion with a well set speech, and returned his sword into his scabbard, that was drawn to cut off her husband and his family. But words alas, how handsomely soever they chime, make no musick in Gods ear, they avail no more with him when his holy Spirit is not in them, than *Esau's* prayers and tears did with old *Isaac* for the blessing. The same Rod which wrought miracles in *Moses* his hand, would have done no such thing in the hand of another, because not acted with the Spirit that *Moses* had. The same words put up in prayer by a mans own private spirit, are weak and ineffectual, yea, distastful and abominable; which delivered by the Spirit of God in another, are mighty with God, and exceedingly acceptable to him. *Kings* have their cooks, and eat not but what is dressed by their hands: The great God I am sure will not like that sacrifice which his Spirit doth not prepare and offer. Those prayers which are highly esteemed and applauded by men, are sometimes a great abomination to the Lord, who sees the heart to be naught, and wholly void of his Spirit and grace. And on the contrary, those prayers which are despised and harshly censured by man, may be highly pleasing to God. *Eli* was offended with *Hanna*, and took her for a drunken woman; but God knew her better, that she was not drunk with wine, but filled with the Spirit in prayer, and therefore answered graciously her request. It was wisely done of that *Grecian*, who being sent Embassador to a forrein Prince, studyed the language of the country, that he might the more effectually perswade the King, by delivering his Embassy in his own tongue. O get thou the Spirit of God, that thou maist pray to God in the language of heaven, and no fear but thou shalt speed. Now if thou wouldst obtain the Spirit,

SECT.

Sect. II.

First, Labour to be deeply sensible of thy deplorable state while without the Spirit; an unsavoury sapleſſe creature thou art (God knows) unable for any duty, uncapable of any comfort. The Spirit is oft in Scripture compared to water, rain, and dew; now as the earth is barren, and can bring forth no fruit without these, so is the heart of man without the Spirit of God. O get thy soul affected with this. When the fields are burnt up for want of rain, man and beast make a moan, yea, the very earth it self, cleft with drought, by opening its thirsty mouth expresseth its extream need of some kind showers from the heavens to refresh it: And hast thou no sense of thy woful condition? which is worse, thinkest thou, to have the earth iron, or thy heart stone? that the fruits and beasts of the field should perish for want of water, or thy soul for want of the Spirit? O couldst thou but be brought to lament thy want, there were hope of having it supplied, *Isa.* 44. 3. *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed.* 1.

Secondly, When thou art inwardly scorch'd with the sense of thy spiritleſſe graceleſſe condition, go and earnestly beg this gift of God; now thou goest in a good time, and maist hope to speed. Possibly thou hast heretofore prayed for the Spirit, but so slightily and indifferently, that thou hast grieved his Spirit while thou hast been praying for him; but now thou seest thy need of him, and thy self undone except thou maist get him, and therefore I hope thou wilt not now shut the door upon thy own prayers, by being a cold suitor; which if thou dost not, thou art sure to bring him away with thee. Christ himself assures thee as much, take it from his own mouth, *Luk.* 11. 13. *If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him.* A father may deny his wanton child bread to play with, and throw under his feet, but not his starving child that cries for bread to preserve his life. God can and will deny him that asks the Spirit, to pride himself with his gifts, but not the hungry soul, that, 2.

that, pinched with his want of grace, humbly, yet vehemently, cries, Lord give me thy Spirit, or elſe I ſtarve, I die. Nay, let me tell thee, thy ſtrong cries and earneſt prayers for the Spirit, would be a ſweet evidence to thee, that thou haſt him already within thee.

3. Thirdly, Plant thy ſelf under the Word preach'd, this is *vehiculum Spiritus*, the Spirits chariot in which he rides, called therefore the *miniſtration of the Spirit*. The Serpent, that evil ſpirit, wrigled into *Eve*'s heart by her ear, and the holy Spirit ordinarily enters in at the ſame door, for he is received *by the hearing of faith*, *Gal.* 3. 2. They that caſt off hearing the Word to meet with the Spirit, do as if a man ſhould turn his back off the Sun, that it may ſhine on his face. The poor do not ſtay at home for the rich to bring their alms to their houſe, but go to their door and there wait for relief. It becomes thee, poor creature, to wait at the poſts of wiſdom, and not expect that the Spirit ſhould lacquey after thee. If the maſter come to the truant ſcholars houſe, it is to whip him to ſchool.

4. Fourthly, Take heed of reſiſting the Spirit when he makes his approaches to thee in the word; ſometimes he knocks, and meeting a repulſe, goes from the ſinners door; this is dangerous. He that hath promiſed to come in if we open, hath not promiſed to come again though we unkindly ſend him away. He doth indeed oft return after repulſes, but ſometimes to ſhew his liberty he doth not, nay, leaves a pad-lock, as I may ſo ſay, on the door, a judiciary hardneſſe and unbelief, which no Miniſters key can open. Thus Chriſt dealt with them that ſo mannerly excuſed themſelves to his meſſengers that invited them, *Luk.* 14. 24. *None of thoſe men that were bidden ſhall taſte of my Supper.* Doth the Spirit move on thy heart in an Ordinance? happy it is by ſome ſecret rebukes, directing the Miniſters finger unawares to touch thy ſore plat. O beware how thou now behaveſt thy ſelf towards the Spirit. Quarrel not with the Preacher as if he had a ſpight againſt thee, and came for a ſpie to find out the nakedneſſe of thy ſoul. Struggle not with thy convictions, ſmother not the motions of the holy Spirit in thy next pillow at night, but rather cheriſh and improve them. It is no little mercy, that as the Spirit went by in his chariot, he would call at thy dore, and give thee ſo merciful a warning, which if kindly received, may bring on

on a treaty of peace betwixt God and thee, that may end in thy conversion here, and salvation hereafter. It heightned the favour which God bestowed on the widow of *Sarepta*, that there were many other widows in *Israel* at the same time, but the *Prophet* was sent to her and not to them; so it enhanceth this mercy vouchsafed to thee, that there should be many other sinners in the Congregation, and yet the Spirit not sent to them but to thee; that his arrows should flie over their heads, and be shot in at thy window with a secret message from heaven, to rouse thy sleepy conscience, and woe thy affections from sin to Christ. Verily the Kingdom of heaven is come nigh unto thee. Be but friendly to these his motions, and thou shalt have more of his company.

Fifthly, Converse with the Saints that have the Spirit of God in them. They that would learn a forreign language, associate with men of that Country whose natural tongue it is. Wouldst thou have the Spirit, and so learn to speak to God in heavens language? Consort with those, who by reason of their heavenly nature will be speaking of God and the things of God unto thee. It is true, they cannot derive and propagate this their spiritual nature; but it is as true, that the Spirit of God may make the gracious discourses which they breathe forth vital and quickning to thee; while thou art with such, thou walkest in the Spirits company. *Joseph* and *Mary* sought Christ among his kindred, supposing it most likely to find him among them. And it is more probable to find the Spirit of Christ among the Saints, his spiritual kindred, than among strangers. The Spirit of God came upon *Saul* when among the *Prophets*, at the hearing of them prophecy and praise God, his spirit was moved also to do the same. Who knows but thy heart may be warm'd at their fire, and from the favour of their graces be drawn thy self to the love of holiness? But above all, take heed of prophane company, this is a great quencher to the Spirits work. When *David* resolves for God and a holy life, he packs the wicked from him, *Depart from me ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God, Psal.* 119. 115. The husbandman busheth his young plants about to keep the cattle off. If there be any buddings and puttings forth of the Spirit of grace in thee, as thou wouldst not have all cropt and bit off, chuse not men of a prophane spirit for thy associates, they 5.

tyey are like the *North-wind* that blows away the rain. When the Spirit of God hath been moving on a soul, the clouds begin to gather in his bosom, and some hopes of a shower of repentance to follow; then comes wicked company and drives all these clouds away, till there be no shew left upon his heart of what before there were great hopes.

CHAP. XIII.

An Exhortation to the Saints not to grieve the Spirit, and how he is grieved in reference to his praying assistance.

2. SEcondly, To the Saints, the word I have for you is to beseech you, not to grieve or quench the holy Spirit in your bosoms. Thou canst not fadge to live long without prayer if a Saint, nor art thou able to pray to purpose without him; when he withdraws, thy hand presently will forget its cunning, such a chilness will invade thy soul, that thou wilt have little list to pray, for it is he that stirs thee up to the duty; and if thou creepest to it, thou wilt not be warm in the work, for it is his divine breath that must make thy green wood burn, thy affections enkindle. Clothes do not warm the body till the body warm them, and the body cannot warm them, except the soul, which is the principle of life, warm it. If there be no warmth in the heart, there can be no fervency in the prayer; and without the Spirit of God (who is to the Christians soul what his soul is to his body) no kindly heat can be in the soul. O take heed therefore thou dost not grieve him, lest being distasted he refuse to assist thee. Now three ways the Spirit of God may be distasted by a Saint, so as to cause him to deny his wonted assistance in prayer.

First,

First, By some sin secretly harboured in the heart; *If I regard iniquity in my heart, thou wilt not hear, Psal.* now when God refuseth to hear, we may be sure the Spirit refuseth to assist; for God never rejects a prayer that his Spirit indites, and his Son presents. Sin is so offensive to the holy Spirit, that where ever it is bid welcome he will shew his distaste. If you would have this pure Dove stay with you, be sure you keep his lodging clean. Hast thou defiled thy self with any known sin? think not to have him help thee in prayer till he hath helpt thee to repent of it; he'l carry thee to the Lavar before he go with thee to the Altar. The Musitian wipes his instrument that hath fallen into the dirt, before he'l set it to his mouth. If thou wouldst have the Spirit of God breathe in thy soul at prayer, present it not to him besmeared with any sin unrepented of. 1.

Secondly, By frequent resisting or putting off his motions. As the Spirit helps in prayer, so he stirs up to prayer; he is the Saints Remembrancer and Monitor, *He shall bring all things* (saith Christ of the Spirit) *to your remembrance, Joh.* 14. 26. God called *Jacob* up to *Bethel*, so the Spirit prompts the Saint to duty; such a mercy thou hast received, up Christian, praise thy God for it while it is fresh in thy memory, and warm in thy heart; such a temptation lies before thee, go pray that thou maist not be led into it. Thy God waits for thy company, and expects thy attendance, now is a fit time for thy withdrawing thy self to hold communion with him, and pay thy homage to him. Now when the Christian shall shift off these motions, and not take the hint he gives, but from time to time neglect his counsel, and discontinue his acquaintance with God notwithstanding these his *mementoes*, he is exceedingly distasted, and taking himself to be slighted, he gives over calling upon him, and leaves the soul for a time, till his absence, and the sad consequences of it, bring him to see his folly, and prepare him to entertain his motions more kindly for the future. Thus *Christ* leaves the *Spouse* in her bed, when she would not rise at his knock, and makes her trot after him many a weary step before he will be seen of her. It is just that God should raise the price of his mercy, when we may have it at an easie rate, and will not. Christ thrice calls up his drousie Disciples to watch and pray, that they might not enter into temptation, but finds them still asleep when he comes; what saith he 2.

then? truly he bids them *sleep on*, as if he had said, Take your course and see what will come of it. Indeed they soon saw it to their sorrow, for they all presently fell into that very temptation, which their Master had so seasonably alarm'd them by prayer to prevent, and this waked them to purpose.

3. Thirdly, By priding our selves in and with the assistances he gives. Pride is a sin that God resists where-ever he meets it, for indeed it is a sin that justles with God himself for the wall. It is time for the Spirit to be gone, when his house is let over his head; he takes it as a giving him warning to be gone, when the soul lifts up it self into his seat; if he may not have the honor of the work he'l have no hand in it. Now the proud man makes the Spirit an underling to himself, he useth his gifts to set up himself with them. Three ways pride discovers it self in prayer, and all to be resisted if we mean to have the Spirits company. *First*, When the creature ascribes the Spirits work to himself, and sets his own name upon the duty, where he should write the Spirits, like *Caligula*, who set the figure of his own head on the statue of *Jupiter*; instead of blessing God for assisting, he applauds himself, and hath a high opinion of his own abilities, pleasing himself with what expressions and enlargements of affection he had in the duty. This is plain Felony, a sin which every gracious soul must needs tremble at. Church-robbery is a great wickedness, O what then is Spirit-robbery? *I live (saith Paul) yet not I, Gal.* 2. 20. *I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10 Thus shouldst thou, Christian, say; I prayed, yet not I; I laboured and wrestled, yet not I, but the Spirit of God that was with me. Applaud not thy self, but humbly admire the grace and dignation of God, to help such a poor creature as thou art; thus *David* did, *Who am I and my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee*, 1 *Chron.* 29.14. That Steward deserves to be put out of his office, that brags of his Masters mony as his own. *Secondly*, When we go to duty in confidence of the gifts and grace we have already received, and do not acknowledge our dependance on the Spirit, by casting our selves after all our preparations upon him for present assistance. As we must pray by the Spirit, so we must ask for him that we may pray by him;

How

How much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him, *Luk.* 11. 13. And it is not once asking for all will serve the turn; thou maist have his help in the morning and want it at night, if thou dost not humbly ask again for his aid. You know how *Sampson* was served, when he thought to go out as he used to do; alas, poor man, the case was altered, he was weak as water, the Spirit was gone and had carried away his strength with him. God will have thee, O Christian, know, the key to thy heart hangs at his girdle, and not thy own, that thou shouldst be able to open and enlarge it at thy pleasure. Acknowledge God, and his Spirit shall help thee; but lean to thy own understanding, and thou art sure to catch a fall. When pride is in the saddle, shame is in the crooper; if pride be at the begining of the duty, shame will be the end of it. *Thirdly*, When we rely on our prayers, and not entirely on Christs mediation for acceptance and audience; this is pride with a witnesse, and highly derogatory to the honor of Christ. God indeed accepts the Saints in prayer, but not for their prayer, but for Christs sake. Now the Spirit, who is Christs messenger, will not, you may be sure, give his assistance, to rob Christ of his glory; when he helps thee to pray, if thou wouldst hearken to his voice, thou might'st hear him calling thee out of thy self, and confidence of thy prayers, to rely wholly on the mediation of Christ. Wrong Christ, and you are sure to grieve his Spirit.

CHA. XIV.

The duty of Watching opened, and why it must attend our Prayers.

Vers. 18. *And watching thereunto.*

THese words present us with the *fifth* branch in the *Apostles* direction for prayer, which I call'd *Prayer's guard.* Prayer to the Saints is as the great Artillery to an Army, of great use to defend them, and of as great force to do execution upon their enemies, therefore needs the stronger guard to be set about it, lest it be taken from them, or turn'd against them by the enemy.

Sect. I.

NOw the guard which the Spirit of God here appoints this great Ordinance of Prayer, is Watching, *watching thereunto.* Watching is either proper or improper, literal or metaphorical. Watching, literally taken is an affection of the body, that onely can properly be said to watch, which is subject to sleep; and so the body is not the soul. Thus to watch in a religious sense, is a voluntary denying of our bodies sleep, that we may spend either the whole or part of the night in pious exercises. Thus the *Jews* kept the night of the *Passover* holy, *Exod.* 12. 42. Our *Saviour* oft spent the night in prayer, *Matth.* 14. *Matth.* 26. 38. We find *Paul* treading in his Lord and Masters

ſters ſteps, 2 *Cor.* 6. 5. *In watchings and faſtings.* Many a ſweet ſpiritual junket holy *Davids* devout ſoul got in the night, when others lay aſleep in their bed, *Pſal.* 63. 6. *My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſſe* ——— *when I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.* No doubt, for a devout ſoul, upon ſome extraordinary occaſions (ſo ſuperſtition be avoided, and health regarded) thus to watch unto prayer is not onely laudable but delectable. *Vigiliæ in quantum valetudinem non perturbant, ſi orando, pſallendo, legendo ſumantur, in delicias ſpirituales convertuntur. Auguſtinus.* Happy ſoul, that can thus ſteal in the dark into the arms of his beloved, and watch for devotion, while others watch to do miſchief, or fill themſelves with impure delights. This is the Chriſtian, whoſe ſoul, like *Gideon's fleece*, ſhall be filled with the dews and influences of heaven above others.

But *ſecondly*, Watching is taken Metaphorically, for the vigilancy or watchfulneſſe of the ſoul; this is principally meant here, and in other Scriptures, where we are commanded to watch, *Mar.* 13. 35. *Rev.* 16. 15. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 6. 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. *cum multis aliis.* Now we ſhall the better underſtand what duty is impoſed upon the Chriſtian under this word [*watching*] if we conſider what bodily watching is; two things it imports, *waking*, and *working*; when a man wakes in the night to attend ſome buſineſſe then to be done, ſuch a one onely truly watcheth; a man that ſleeps not in the night, but to no purpoſe, for no buſineſſe that he hath to diſpatch, he may be ſaid to wake but not to watch, for this relates to ſome employment he hath in charge to look to. Thus the *Shepheards* are ſaid to *keep watch over their flock in the night*, *Luk.* 2. 8. and the Diſciples *watcht with Chriſt*, while they ſate up to wait on him the night before his paſſion, *Matth.* 26. 40. So that for a Chriſtian to watch in a ſpiritual ſenſe, is to preſerve his ſoul awake from ſin in the night of this world, that he may keep the Lords charge, and do the duty impoſed upon him as a Chriſtian. Now prayer being one principal duty he is to attend, and intend with all his might, therefore watching is very often joyned with it, *Matth.* 26. 41. *Mar.* 13. 33. *Luk.* 21. 36. *Col.* 4 2. 1 *Pet.* 4. 7. In handling this duty of watching unto prayer, I ſhall firſt ſhew, why the Chriſtian is to watch unto prayer; ſecondly, wherein the duty of watchfulneſſe,

neſſe, in reference to prayer, conſiſts; thirdly, I ſhall ſet the Chriſtians watch for him, by giving ſome little counſel and help towards his conſtant performing this duty of watchfulneſſe, for it is not a temporary duty, but for his whole life time. *I inſt*, Why muſt the Chriſtian watch to prayer?

SECT. II.

1. FIrſt, Becauſe of the importance of the duty of prayer; no one action doth a Chriſtian meet with in his whole life of greater weight and moment, than this of prayer is, and that in regard of God, or himſelf; *firſt*, in regard of God. Prayer is an act of Religious worſhip, we have immediately to do with the great God, to whom we approach in prayer. Now Religion is as tender as the eye, it is not a thing to be played with or handled, without great care and heedfulneſſe. Prayer is too ſacred a duty to be performed between ſleeping and waking, with a heavy eye, or a drouſie heart; this God complain'd of, *There is none that calleth upon my name, that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of thee*, *Iſa.* 64.7. he counts it no prayer where the heart is not ſtirred up and awake. No way can we more honor, or diſhonor God, than in prayer; O how then ought we to watch to this duty? Again, in regard of our ſelves; for our behaviour in prayer hath an univerſal influence into all the paſſages of our whole life; as a man is in this duty, ſo he is likely to be in all the reſt; if careleſs in praying, then ſlighty in hearing, looſe in his walking, he ſhall find that he miſcarries in all his enterprizes, is enſnared in all his enjoyments, baffled with every temptation, and diſcompoſed at every affliction that meets him: and the reaſon of all this is, becauſe our ſtrength both to do and ſuffer comes from God; now God communicates his aſſiſtance to his children in a way of communion with them; they ask, and they have; they ſeek, and find; knock, and the treaſury of mercy is opened to them. Prayer is the channel, in which the ſtream of divine grace, bleſſing, and comfort runs from God the fountain into the ciſtern of their hearts; damm up the channel, and the ſtream is ſtopt, if the ſtomack doth not its office, all the members want their nouriſhment; if the trade fails in the ſhop, there is but a poor houſe kept within.

Secondly,

Secondly, Watchfulneſſe is of as great importance to prayer, as prayer is to all our other duties, no duty can be diſpatcht well without prayer, nor prayer without watching; for it is not prayer, but prayer performed in a holy ſpiritual manner that is effectual, now this cannot be done when the Chriſtian is off his watch. Take the Chriſtian a napping, with his graces in a ſlumber, and he is no fitter to pray, than a man is to work that is aſleep; what ever a man is doing, ſleep when it comes puts an end to it; ſleep it is the great Leveller of the world, it makes all men alike; the ſtrong man is as unable to defend himſelf from an enemy in his ſleep, as the child; the rich man aſleep and the poor are alike, he enjoys his eſtate no more than if he had none. Thus the Chriſtian, while his graces are aſleep, is even like another that hath no grace (as to the preſent uſe of them I mean) he'l pray as the carnal man doth, enjoy God no more in the duty than ſuch a one would do. O how ſad is this! and yet how prone are we to give way unto this drouſineſſe of ſpirit in prayer? it creeps inſenſibly upon the ſoul, as ſleep doth upon the body, the heart is gone before the Chriſtian is well aware. The more need therefore there is to watch againſt it. 2.

Thirdly, Becauſe Satan is ſo watchful againſt prayer, therefore it behooves the Chriſtian to watch unto prayer: Where ſhould the ſtrongeſt guard be ſet, but where the enemy maketh his fierceſt aſſault? This is the Fort he batters, and labours with all his might to beat the Chriſtian from, well knowing the ſhot which gall him moſt come out of it. What he doth otherwiſe againſt the Chriſtian, is on a deſign to hinder his prayers, 1 *Pet.* 3.7. as an enemy falls upon one part of the City, to draw their forces from another place, which he chiefly deſires to gain. Indeed the ſoul never falls fully into his hands, till it throws up this duty, *Pray that ye enter not into temptation.* Sometimes the City is taken, and the enemy is forced back again by thoſe in the Caſtle, which commands the City. Prayer is like ſuch a Caſtle, ſometimes the Chriſtian hath nothing left him but a ſpirit of prayer, and with this he beats back the devil out of all his advantages, and wrings out of his hands his new gotten victories. 3.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Shews wherein the Christians duty of watching to prayer lies.

2. THe second thing I promised was to shew, wherein the Christian is to expresse his watchfulnesse in reference to this duty of prayer. Take it in these three particulars; *First*, He is to watch before prayer. *Secondly*, He is to watch in prayer. *Thirdly*, He is to watch after prayer.

SECT. I.

1. FIrst, He is to shew his watchfulnesse before prayer, and that, *first*, by watching for the fit season to pray in. We cannot be always on our knees, we may serve God all the day, but worship him we cannot; this is a duty that requires some set times for its exercises. Now it is our duty to watch for the season of prayer, as the Merchant watcheth for the Exchange hour, he orders his other occasions so, that by no means he may misse that. Thus the Christian should endeavour to dispose his occasions so, that his devotions be not shut out, or crowded up into streights of time by his improvidence; no, nor interfere with other necessary duties. Many a fair child is lost by an untimely birth, and good duty spoiled by being unseasonably performed.

2. *Secondly*, He is to keep a strict watch over himself in his whole course; *first*, by shunning all that may defile his conscience, and so render him unmeet for communion with God. Thus the *Priest* was to watch himself, that he toucht no unclean thing, God thereby signifying, that he will have them to be holy in their lives, that approach near to him in the duties of his worship.

Secondly,

Secondly, By a holy care to observe and lay up the most remarkable passages of Gods providence to him, as also the frame and behaviour of his own heart to God, all along the interval between prayer and prayer; the want of this part of watchfulnesse is the cause, why we are so jejune and barren in the performance of this duty. It is no wonder that he should want matter for his prayer at night, and trifle in it with impertinencies, who did not treasure up what past in the day betwixt God and him. Though the Minister be not making his Sermon all the week, yet by observing in his other studies what may be useful for him in that work, he is furnish'd with many hints that help him when he goes about it; such an advantage the Christian will find for prayer, by laying up the remarkable instances of Gods providence to him, and of his carriage to God again under them; these will furnish him with necessary materials for the performance. The bag is filling while the kine are feeding, or chewing the cud, and accordingly yields more plenty when milk'd at night; truly thus it is here, that Christian must needs be most fruitful and plentiful in his devotions, when he comes to pour out his heart to God in prayer, that hath been thus filling it all the day with meditations sutable and helpful to the duty; would he praise God? he hath the preservations, deliverances, and assistances which God hath given in to him at hand, in the common-place book of his memory, which another hath lost for want of writing them down in this book of remembrance. Would he humbly confesse the sins of the day? he presently recalls, In this company I forgat my self, and spake unadvisedly with my lips; in that enjoyment I observed my heart to be inordinate; this duty I omitted, that I was remisse and negligent in doing. Now what a wonderful help hath such a soul above another that walks at random, to get his soul into a melting mourning frame? the eye affects the heart, the presence of the object actuates the affection: the sight of an enemy stirs up anger, the sight of a dear friend excites love, and puts a man into a suddain ravishment, whom may be he should not have thought on if he had not seen him. How can they mourn for the sins of the day at night, who remember them no more than *Nebuchadnezzar* his dream? *Thirdly*, By the frequent exercise of ejaculatory prayer; he doth not watch to pray, that never thinks on God but when he is on his knees, for by this long discontinuing

nuing his acquaintance with God, he indiſpoſeth himſelf for the more ſolemn addreſſes of his ſoul to God. Long faſting takes away the ſtomack, the Chriſtian will find, that the oftner he is refreſhing his ſpirit with thoſe little ſips and ſhort guſts of heaven, the larger draught he will be able to take when he returns to his ſet meal of morning and evening prayer; for by the means of theſe, he will be ſecured from worldly affections which exceedingly deaden the heart, and alſo be ſeaſon'd and prepared for further communion with God; theſe ſhort walks often taken, keep the ſoul in breath for a longer journey.

Sect. II.

2. He muſt watch in prayer. It is not enough to watch the child that he goes to School, but the Maſters eye muſt watch him in School; to be idle at School is as bad as to truant from it. Thou doſt well, Chriſtian, to take care of thy ſelf before prayer, and to ſee that the duty be not omitted; but wilt thou now leave it at the School-door? truly then all thy former care is to little purpoſe. *Firſt*, Thou muſt watch thy outward man, and rouſe that up from ſleep and ſloth; if the body be heavy-ey'd in prayer, the ſoul muſt needs be heavy heel'd; the pen drops out of the writers hand when he falls aſleep. *Watch and pray*, ſaith Chriſt to his Diſciples, he knew they could not do that work nodding; and yet how many do we ſee at the very time of prayer in our Congregations ſo far from watching (in this ſenſe) that they invite ſleep to come upon them by laying themſelves in a lazy poſture? Certainly, friends, communion with God is worth keeping our eyes open; little do theſe drones think what contempt they caſt upon God and his Ordinance. I wonder any n can ſleep at the worſhip of God, and not dream of hell-fire in their ſleep. But it is not enough to keep thy eye awaked, if thou ſuffereſt it to wander; *Keep back my eye* (ſaith *David*) *from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way*, *Pſal.* 119. *Secondly*, Thou muſt watch thy ſoul in prayer. The ſoul is the man, and the ſoul in prayer is the very ſoul of prayer. Watch what its ends and aims are, that it ſhoots not beſide the mark; watch what

what ſtrength and force thy ſoul puts to the work: our prayers miſcarry by ſhooting ſhort as well as wide. In a word, Thou muſt keep thy heart with all diligence from one end of the duty to the other, or elſe it will give thee the ſlip before thou art aware. How oft, alas, do our ſouls begin to ſpeak with God in a prayer, and on a ſudden fall a chatting with the world? one while our hearts are warm at the work, and we purſue hard after God with full cry of our affections, but inſtantly we are at a loſſe, and hunt cold again. Holy *David* was ſenſible of this, and therefore we have him in the midſt of this duty begging help from God to call in his gadding heart, *Pſal.* 86. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy name.*

Sect. III.

THe Chriſtian is to watch after prayer, *firſt*, by calling his ſoul to a review concerning the duty, how it was performed by him. God himſelf, when he had finiſh'd his works of creation, looks back upon them, *Gen.* 1. 31. *And God ſaw every thing that he had made*; that is, he viewed his work, as an Artiſt would do a piece he hath drawn. He hath given us all a faculty to reflect upon our actions, and looks we ſhould uſe it, yea, complains of thoſe that do not *conſider their ways and doings.* Many duties depend upon this. He that looks not back how he prayed, can he be humbled for the ſins that cleaved to it? and will God pardon what he takes no care to know, that he may ſhew his repentance for them? or will he mend thoſe faults in the next prayer which he found not out in the former? no, but rather encreaſe them. We need not water weeds, let them but ſtand unpluck'd up and they will grow alone. This is the ſluggard, whoſe ſoul will ſoon run into a wilderneſſe, and be over-grown with thoſe ſins in prayer, which at laſt may choke the very ſpirit of ſupplication in him. *Secondly*, By obſerving what is the iſſue and ſucceſſe of his prayer; as he is to look back and ſee how he prayed, ſo forward to obſerve what return he finds of his prayer. To pray and not watch what becomes of our prayer, is a great folly and no little ſin; like children that throw ſtones into a River, which they never look to ſee more. What is this but to take the Name

of God in vain, and play with an Ordinance that is holy and sacred? Yet thus, alas, do many knock at Gods door, (as idle children at ours) and then run away to the world (as they to their play) and think no more of their prayers; or like *Pilat*, who ask'd Christ, *What is truth?* and when he had said this, went out to the *Jews*, forgetting what he askt. Holy *David* did not think prayer such an idle errand, *Psal.* 5. 3. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord: I will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.* First, He is careful to take his aim right in delivering this arrow of prayer, which he sends with a message to heaven, *I will direct my prayer to thee*; then he is as careful to observe where his arrow lights, and what answer is made to it, *and I will look up*, which amounts to as much as that expression, *Psal.* 85. *I will hear what God the Lord will speak*, that is, to me, concerning the prayer which in those words immediately foregoing he had made, *Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.* When the Merchant hath sent his ship to sea, he is enquiring at the *Exchange* after her, to hear how she got to her port, whether on her return, and with what lading. When the Husbandman hath cast his seed into the ground, then he comes every day almost to see how it comes up. This, Christian, is to watch unto prayer, to wait for answers to prayer. *Mordecai* no doubt had put up many prayers for *Ester*, and therefore he waits at the Kings gate, looking what answer God would in his providence give thereunto.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Wherein the Christians watch is set for him about prayer, or counsel given how he may set it.

THE third thing I promised, was to help the Christian in setting off his watch, or to give some directions how he may keep his heart in a watchful frame, which take as they follow in these particulars.

SECT. I.

First, Harbour not any known sin in thy bosom. Sin hath two contrary effects on the conscience, and both sad enough; either it fills the conscience with horror, or benums and stupifies it; it breaks the souls rest, or takes away its sense; the latter is the more common. Suffer the devil to annoint thy temples with this *opium*, and thou art in danger to fall into the sleeping disease of a stupid conscience, little list then thou wilt have to pray. Or if it hath the other effect upon thee, thou wilt be as much afraid, as now thou dost little desire to pray. 1.

Secondly, Beware of any excesse in thy affections to the creature. A drunken man of all other is most unfitting to watch, *such* a one will be asleep as soon as he is set in his chair; now all inordinacy of affection is a spiritual drunkennesse, Christ joyns both togeather, *Take heed to your selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkennesse, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares*, Luk. 21. 34. it is a preservative against drousinesse of spirit, that the day of the Lord might not take them napping; and of the two, the drunkennesse of the affection is the worse: He that is bodily drunk over- 2.

night,

night, is sober by the morning; but he that is overcharged with the cares or love of the world, rises as drunk as he lay down, and how can he then watch unto prayer? We have therefore these two often joyned together, 1 *Thess.* 5. 6. *Let us watch and be sober.* 1 *Pet.* 4. 7. *Be ye therefore sober and watch.* Whatever the affection is, the intemperance of it lays the soul under a distemper, and indisposeth it to prayer; is it sorrow? our Saviour finds his Disciples *sleeping for sorrow*, when they should have watched and prayed, *Luk.* 22. 45. Is it love? this laid *Samson* asleep in *Dalila's* lap. The heart of man hath not room enough for God and the world too, worldly affections do not befriend spiritual, the heart which spends it self in mourning for worldly crosses, will find the stream runs low when he should weep for his sins; if the cares of this life fill his head and heart, he will have little list to wait on God for spiritual purposes. It is no wonder that the Master finds his servant asleep in the day when he should be at work for him, if he sate up revelling all the night.

SECT. II.

3. *Thirdly*, Resist this spiritual drousinesse when it first creeps upon thee. Sleep is easier kept off when approaching, then shaken off when it hath got possession and bound the senses. This sleepy disease of the soul steals insensibly upon us, even as the night steps in by little and little; when therefore thou findest it coming, rouse up thy self; as a man who hath businesse to do, would start up from his chair to shake off his drousinesse. Now thou maist observe these few symptoms of this distemper invading thee; *First*, An unwillingnesse and backwardnesse to duty, if thou findest this, it appears thou beginnest to be heavy-eyed; when grace is wakeful, the Christian needs not many words to perswade him into Gods presence: *Thou saidst, seek my face; my heart said, Thy face will I seek.* Therefore conclude thou maist, that some vapours have fumed up from thy corruptions, to dull and deaden thy heart to the work. He that would run to the dore (when awake) at the first knock of his dear friend to let him in, may, when between sleeping and waking, let him stand too long; this was the *Spouses* case, and lost her the company of her

her beloved, it shew'd plainly she was in a sleepy distemper, in that she was so backward to duty, for that was the door Christ would have met her at. *Secondly*, Formality in prayer is a certain symptom that a sleepy distemper hangs about thee; grace awake is full of life and activity, at least it discovers it self by making the soul deeply sensible of its deadnesse and dulnesse. *Vigilantis est somnium narrare*, saith *Seneca*, it shews the man awake that tells his dream what he did in his sleep; and it proves the soul awake that can feelingly and mournfully confesse his deadnesse. *Thirdly*, Prevalency of wandring thoughts. In sleep, fancy and imagination rules and ranges without any controul. If thy thoughts range and scatter into impertinencies in time of prayer, and meet with no check from thee, it shevvs thy grace, if thou hast any, is not well awake.

SECT. III.

Fourthly, Expresse a conscientious diligence at thy particular calling in the intervals of prayer. They that sit up to watch had need of some work to keep them awake; idlenesse is but one remove from sleep. I cannot believe that he who lazeth a day away in idlenesse, should find his heart awake to pray at night, for he hath that day lived in the neglect of a duty as necessary as this; and it is bad going to one duty through the neglect of another. There is a generation of men indeed, that under a pretence of watching and praying always, betake themselves to their cloisters, and renounce all secular employments, as if it were as easie to put off the world as to change their cloathes, and get on a Coul or a religious habit; but the vvorld hath found those places commonly to have proved, not so much houses to pray in, as dens to dravv their prey into; it is more like, that those vvho are pamper'd vvith sloth and fulnesse of bread, should be eaten up vvith luxury and sensuality, than vvith zeal and devotion: the air, vvhen still, thickens and corrupts, the spirits in our body are choaked vvith rest, and the soul needs motion and exercise as much as either, in spiritual offices it cannot hold out vvithout intermittings therefore God hath provided our particular callings as a relief to our spiritual devotions, onely our care must be not to

to over-do. The ſame thing may quicken and weaken, wake us, and lay us aſleep. No greater help to our religious offices, than a faithful diſcharge of our particular calling; no greater duller of the Spirit of prayer than the ſame, vvhen inordinately purſued. The ſame oil feeds the Lamp, and drovvns it, if exceſſively poured on. Hold the candle one vvay, and the vvax nouriſhes the flame; turn the other end up, it puts it out.

5. Fifthly, Preſerve a ſenſe of thy ſpiritual wants. As fulneſſe inclines the body to ſleep, ſo doth a conceit of ſpiritual fulneſſe the ſoul; when the belly is full, then the bones would be at reſt, the man hath more mind to ſleep than work; whereas he that is pinched with hunger, his empty craving ſtomack keeps him awake; if once thou beginneſt to have a high opinion of thy ſelf, and thy ſpiritual hunger be a little ſtaid (from a conceit of thy preſent ſtore, and ſufficiency of thy grace) truly then thou wilt compoſe thy ſelf to ſleep, and ſing the rich mans Lullaby to thy ſoul, *Take thy eaſe, O my ſoul, thou haſt goods laid up for many years*: The *Corinthians* are a ſad inſtance for this purpoſe, 1 *Cor.* 4. 8. *Now ye are ful, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us*, *Paul* is now no body with you, the time hath been you could not be without his pains, the hungry child did no more cry for the breaſt than you for the Word preached by him; but now your ſtomack is ſtayed, you are full and can live without him: whereas, God knows, it was a fulneſſe of wind of pride, not of ſolid grace. It is the nature of grace to dilate the heart, and make room for more, but of pride to cloy and glut the ſoul. God hath long kept open houſe in *England*, the Wine-cellar door of his Ordinances hath not been ſhut upon us, we have had free acceſſe to drink, and that abundantly, of their ſweet wine. But alas! may it not be for a lamentation to ſee, how many are drunk with ſpiritual pride, rather than filled with grace, after ſo long an enjoyment of them? inſomuch that ſome have attempted to ſtave the very veſſels from which they have drawn this wine; ſuch are they that decry all Ordinances, and would down with Miniſters and Miniſtry; yea, who can live without publick preaching and private praying alſo. Others not ſo mad drunk as the former, yet are fallen aſleep under the tap, they have loſt their firſt life in, and love to Ordinances, they ſit with ſleepy eyes and dead hearts under them. Well, Chriſtian, if thou wouldſt keep thy

thy soul awake for this or any other Ordinance, take heed thou loseſt not the ſenſe of thy wants. Begging is the poor mans trade; when thou beginneſt to conceit thy ſelf rich, then thou wilt be in danger to give it over, or be remiſſe in it.

SECT. IV.

Sixthly, Retire often to muſe on ſome ſoul-awakning medi- 6.
tations; we ſeldom ſleep when we are thoughtful, eſpecially if the thoughts we muſe on be of weight and importance enough to intend and occupy the mind: Indeed, idle trivial thoughts, ſuch as have nothing to invite attention, are given as a ready means to bring a man aſleep (I mean bodily ſleep.) That Chriſtian who neglects frequently to meditate on ſpiritual things, and lets his thoughts walk all day in the company of carnal worldly occaſions, I ſhould wonder if he finds his heart awake at night to pray in a ſpiritual manner. Give me therefore leave to preſent a few ſubjects for thy meditations to inſiſt upon, and they will be as the braſen Ball, which ſome *Philoſophers* uſed to hold in their hand that they might not ſleep too long; or as the Alarm which men ſet over night to call them up to their buſineſſe early in the morning.

Meditate of Chriſts coming to judgment. Surely thou wilt not eaſily ſleep while this Trumpet, that ſhall call all mankind to judgment ſhall ſound in thy ear. The reaſon why men ſleep ſo ſoundly in ſecurity, is, becauſe they either do not believe this, or at leaſt do not think of it ſeriouſly, ſo as to expect it. The ſervant that looks for his maſter will be loth to be found in bed when he comes; no, ſits up to open the door for him when he knocks. Chriſt hath told us he will come, but not when, that we might never put off our cloathes, or put out the candle; *Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour the Lord doth come*, *Matth.* 24. 42. There are indeed negative ſignes concerning his coming to the general judgment of the world, by which we may know he will not yet come, as the fall of *Babylon*, the calling of the *Jews*, and other prophecies, that muſt be fulfilled; before which he will not come: but no ſuch, from which we can conclude that his coming to any of us in particular to take

us away by death, and ſummon us to our particular judgment before his Bar, ſhall not yet be. Thou art young, thou canſt not therefore ſay, thou ſhalt not die as yet; alas, meaſure the Coffins in the Church-yard, and thou wilt find ſome of thy length; young and old are within the reach of deaths ſithe; old men indeed they go to death, their Age calls for it; but young men cannot hinder deaths coming unto them. Thou art rich, will this excuſe thee? Rich men indeed they can get others to ſerve in their Arms here, when their Prince calls them forth to War; but *there is no diſcharge in this War*. *Salomon* tells us, Thou muſt perſonally do this; thou art ſtrong and luſty, thou canſt not therefore ſay, that death will be longer at work to fell thee down. Some indeed he cuts down by Chips in Conſumptive Diſeaſes, they die by piece-meals; others he tears up in one Night, as a Tree by a Tempeſt: O think of this, and thy ſleep will depart from thee.

2. 2ly. Conſider the Devil is alwayes awake; is it time for them in the City to ſleep, when the Enemy without Watch, and may be, are climbing the Walls? Our Saviour takes it for granted, *If the good man of the houſe had known in what Watch the Thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have ſuffered his houſe to be broken up*, Mat. 24. 44. Of all the Nights in the Year, he would not then have ſlept. Would *Saul* have ſlept in his Trench, if he had thought *David* had been ſo near? Or *Siſera* have lain down to reſt, if he had ſeen the Hammer and Nail in *Jaels* hand to drive through his Temples? *Hannibal is at the Gates*, was enough to wake the whole City of *Rome*, and call them to their Arms; and is not *Diabolus ad Oſtium*, the Devil is at thy door, enough to keep thee out of thy bed of ſloath and negligence? what day in all the Year is no Term to Satan? what place or company art thou in, that he cannot make a ſnare to thy ſoul? what member of thy body, or faculty of thy ſoul, which is not in danger to be abuſed by him? haſt thou not an inmate in thy own boſome that watcheth to open the gate to him? And is there not a conſtant correſpondence between them? O how oft doth he beat us (as *Bernard* ſaith) with our own ſtaffe; and (as the Thief ſometimes ſerves the Traveller) binds us with our own Garters? Shall we not alwayes watch to pray, when he watcheth to tempt? Shall not we keep our Correſpondence with God and Chriſt our Allies in Heaven, as he doth with our fleſh that is his Confederate?

Vt jugulent homines surgunt de nocte latrones;
Vt t'ipsum serves non expergisceris.

Shall thy Enemy be awake to seek to cut thy Throat, and wilt not thou rise to save it?

Consider, wicked men they are awake, and hard at work for Satan and their lusts. The Philosopher blush't, that the Smith should be up, and have his Hammer in his hand, before he had his Book. O may it not put the Christian to shame!

3ly. Consider how watchful the men of the World are to follow their worldly businesse; Do they not rise early, and go to Bed late, grutching the very time that is spent to refresh nature in the Night with sleep, so bent they are upon their carnal projects! The *Philosopher* observed this, and shamed himself for suffering the Smith to be at his Anvile in the Morning, sooner than he was at his Book. O Christian, should it not make thee blush much more, to see the whole Town up, and as busie as Bees about a Garden, one flying this way, another that way; and all to bring a little more of this Worlds perishing pelf into their Hive, out of which, death ere long will smoak them, and force them to leave what with so much pains they have gathered for others, they know not who, possibly their greatest Enemies; while thou Christian sleepest away thy precious time, though thou art sure to carry thy gettings into the other World with thee, and there enjoy the fruit of thy short labour here with everlasting glory! Nay, consider how watchful the Wicked are to take all opportunities to pursue their works of darkness. The Adulterer watcheth for the twilight to meet his Minion, and wilt not thou watch unto prayer, that thou mayst fill thy soul with spiritual loves in Communion with thy God? The Thief is up at Midnight to get his prey; and wilt not thou break thy rest a little for to obtain a richer Treasure than is to be found in the Coffers of the richest Princes that the World boasts of? Shall these be at so much pains to satisfie their lusts, and thou take none to honour and enjoy thy God? O what a shame was it to the heavy-eyed Disciples, that they could not watch to pray with their Master, when *Judas* that bold Traytour was so wakeful, to be up in the dead of the Night to betray him into his Murderers hands? 3.

4. 4ly. Consider how short the time is that thou art desired to watch: *Could you not watch with me one hour* (saith *Christ*) *Matth.* 26. 40. Ere long Christian thou shalt be call'd off thy Guard, and then thou shalt have all rest, though no sleep; it is but for this short life thou art put to stand upon this hard duty; and is that so long? others do not count it so. O how soon is a day, a year, yea, a life past at play or sin? The great complaint that such make, is, time is short, they wish they could clip its wings, and take off the weights from this Clock, that make it post away so fast: Is time so short and sweet to spend in sin? and can it be tedious to thee to bestow it in devotion? Why should an hour in the Closet be thought by a Saint long, when day and night spent in an Alehouse is too short for the sinner? But above all consider, whether it be not better to watch and pray here on Earth for a few dayes, than to wake and roar in Hell under endless and easeless torments!

5. 5ly. Consider seriously how great a loser thou hast been already in thy heavenly Trade for want of watching, it is with the Christian, as with some negligent Merchant, who takes notice of some one loss, of a round Sum that befalls him (may be some hundreds at a Clap) at this he cries, He shall be undone; but regards not the pence and shillings that he idly spends, nor considers his loss which follows upon his daily negligence; here his Estate melts insensibly, and he is not aware of it; whereas would he count what in this dribling way is lost by Retail, he might find it amounts to more than the other. Thus the Christian sometimes is troubled for one great sin into which he hath fallen (and that not without Reason) but withall, he observes not how he neglects this duty to day, and negligently performs that at another time; how he now prays coldly for want of due preparation; and what little fruit comes of another for want of watchfulness after it, whereby in time he falls low, though with an easie descent, step by step; whereas if he could bring the several *Items* of these his particular losses together, he would find them swell into a sad reckoning, except with these his losses, he hath also lost (which is the greatest) the tenderness of his Conscience. Now Christian hast thou not a mind to thrive at last? and shall a careless Christian adde to his stock? Did you ever go by the Sluggards Field, and not find it overgrown with Thorns? Wouldst thou but be perswaded to make

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it thy buſineſs daily to watch thy heart, how thou prayeſt, and how thou walkeſt, after thou haſt been at prayer, thou ſhouldſt find a bleſſed change in thy ſpiritual Affairs; this ſtrictneſs will at firſt be uneaſie, like a new Suit; but every day that will wear off, and a ſweet facility follow, when thou ſhalt ſee thy gains come trowling in by it; he that finds how well he is paid for his diligence, by the encreaſe of his Eſtate, will not grutch the Sluggard his eaſe, when he ſhall ſee him walk by his door in Rags: It was the ſaying once of a rich man, who by Gods bleſſing on his diligence had raiſed a vaſt Eſtate, that at his firſt ſetting up in the World, he got a little with much trouble; but afterwards, he got his great gains with little trouble. And thou Chriſtian wilt find the ſame in thy ſpiritual Trade; thy trouble will be moſt at firſt, but thy gains moſt at laſt; and the trouble leſs, becauſe the way of godlineſs by uſe and experience will be naturaliz'd to thee, and conſequently become eaſie and delightful.

6ly. Conſider what others loſe by thy not watching; he that lives in a Town, wrongs his Neighbour as well as himſelf, by not looking to his Fence: Thus one Chriſtian may injure many, by not keeping his own watch. *Firſt*, Thy very Example is a wrong to others, for this ſleepy diſeaſe is catching; thy looſe Converſation may make others ſo: As one learns to yawn of another, it is no ſmall bleſſing to live among active Chriſtians, whoſe zeal and forwardneſs in the wayes of God is exemplary; this puts mettle in thoſe that follow them; the heavenly holy Converſation of a Maſter, is a help to the whole Family. *Secondly*, Thou indiſpoſeſt thy ſelf for doing thy duty to them; we are commanded to watch over one another in love, as thoſe that are concern'd in our Brethrens welfare. Now how unfit is he to watch over others, that doth not watch himſelf? To provoke others to love and to good works, who needs himſelf the ſpur? Can one aſleep wake another that is ſo? 6.

7ly, And laſtly, Conſider Chriſts watchful care over thee; look upon him in his Providence; that eye which neither ſleeps by night, nor ſlumbers by day, is thy conſtant Keeper: Conſider him in his Interceſſion, there he prayes for thee, watching thereunto with all perſeverance; it is his Trade and Buſineſs in Heaven: *For he lives to make Interceſſion for his Saints.* Conſider him in his Spirit; what is he, but Chriſts Meſſenger, ſent as our Guardian, 7.

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to take care of the Saints in his absence? In a word, consider him in the Gospel-Ministry, which is set up for this very purpose, to watch for your souls; yea, every private Saint hath a charge to be his Brothers Keeper; this well considered, would make thee *first*, watchful to promote his glory, that so carefully provides for thy safety. What put *David* into such a rage against *Nabal*, but the disrespect that his servants found at his hands, to whom he had been so serviceable: *In vain have I kept all that this Fellow hath.* *Secondly*, It would make thee the more watchful over thy own soul; if thou hast so much ingenuity as to fear grieving of thy God, who expresseth this tender care over thee; what greater grief can the indulgent Parent have, than to see his child not mind his own good after all his care and cost laid out upon him? he joyes to see the money he gives him improved and encreased by his diligence; but it breaks his very heart with sorrow, when it is all wasted and squandred away by ill husbandry.

CHAP. XVII.

With all Perseverance.

These words [*With all Perseverance*] contain the fifth Branch in the Apostles Direction for Prayer; which I shall dispatch briefly in these four heads.

First, By giving the importance of this phrase, *All Perseverance.*

Secondly, By giving the Reason why we are to pray *With all Perseverance.*

Thirdly, I shall cast in some Considerations to move us to the Duty.

Fourthly, Wind up the Discourse with a word of Counsel and Direction for the help of the weak Christian therein.

SECT.

SECT. I.

Firſt, FOR the importance of the phraſe. Here is perſeverance, yea, all perſeverance required in Prayer. *Firſt*, Let us enquire what is meant by perſeverance? *Secondly*, What by all perſeverance. *Firſt*, Here is required perſeverance. The word προσκαρτέρησις here uſed, comes from Καρτος, the ſame with Κρατος, (a letter only tranſpoſed to melt the ſound) it ſignifies ſtrength and victory; hence its compound προσκαρτερεῖν, is to proſecute any buſineſs with an unwearied conſtancy, till all difficulties be conquer'd, and the thing at laſt be accompliſh't. It is uſed for the diligence and labour of hunting Dogs, that follow the Chaſe, till at laſt they get the Game purſued; it is applyed alſo to Lacquies, that with great labour run after their Maſters, and are at their hand in a Journey. In Scripture, it is frequently applied to the duty of Prayer; as, *Acts* 6. 4. *Col.* 4. 2. *Rom.* 12. 12. And ſignifies that invincible patience, courage and conſtancy which a Chriſtian is to ſhew in upholding this duty of Prayer. 1.

Queſt. But are *praying always* in the beginning of this Verſe, and this *praying with perſeverance* the ſame? if not, wherein lies the difference? *Queſt.*

Anſw. It cannot be thought, the *Apoſtle* being giving directions for Prayer, would let them interfere one with another, and in ſo ſhort a ſpace repeat the ſame Direction over again in other words; the reſt are all diſtinct; ſo therefore will we take theſe. *Calvin* makes this to be the difference *by praying always* (ſaith he) he exhorts us to pray in proſperity, as well as in adverſity; and not then to intermit the practice of this duty, becauſe not driven to it by ſuch outward preſſing neceſſities; but by praying with perſeverance. *Admonet, ne defatigemur, inſtandum eſſe alacri animo; infracto ſtudeo continuandas eſſe preces, ſi non ſtatim conſequamur quod volumus.* He admoniſheth, that we be not weary of the work; but continue inſtant and conſtant in its performance, though we have not preſently what we pray for. *By praying always*, we are exhorted to the daily conſtant exerciſe of the duty of prayer; not to neglect the ſeaſons for prayers, as they return upon us. *By praying with perſeverance*, we are preſſed to bear up againſt Diſcouragements as to any particular ſuit or requeſt *Anſw.*

request we make at the Throne of Grace, and not to give over, though we have not a speedy answer to it; so that the former is opposed to a neglect of the duty in its stated seasons, and the latter to a fainting in our spirits, as to any particular suit we put up. We may keep our constant course of prayer, and yet not persevere in prayer for this or that mercy which God withholds some time for the exercise of our grace.

Secondly, I must shew what is meant by *all perseverance.*

1. *First*, By all perseverance is meant such a perseverance as holds out to the end, till God doth give the thing we pray for, or takes away the subject of our prayer, as he did in *Davids* case for his sick child by his death. It is possible a soul may continue long, yet at last faint, when it sees the time for answering still protracted, God still stayes, and no newes of his coming, after many a dispatch sent to Heaven upon that occasion. O 'tis hard to *hold up our hands* with *Moses, to the going down of the Sun.* Christ complains how rare and scarce such a faith is to be found, when he bears long before he throws in the mercy prayed for: *Nevertheless when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith upon the Earth?* Luke 18.8. Shall he find so much Faith as to keep his People at Prayer in expectation of his coming to their relief?

2. *Secondly*, By all perseverance, is meant a perseverance of the whole man in Prayer; we must not only persevere to hold up the outward performance of the duty of Prayer; but persevere to exert the inward powers of our souls, and their graces in the duty. The duty may be kept up, and the heart be down in performing it. The faith, zeal, and other graces of the soul may be gone, or act but feebly; like an Army, that hath not yet quitted the field; but their Powder and Shot are even all spent, there they stand, and set a good face on it, but can do little or nothing to offend the Enemy, or defend themselves. Thus many in afflictions pray still, they have not yet given over the duty, and run out of the Field; but alas their faith fails, and their heart quails, there is little life and vigour to be seen in the performance; here is some kind of perseverance, but not this all perseverance, which above all requires the perseverance of grace in its acting at the duty: So we translate the word, *Rom.* 12. 12. what is here with perseverance, is there *continuing instant in Prayer*, the word is προσκαρτερεῖτε: Some are instant, but it lasts not; if they find the mercy comes, they draw hard;

hard; but if their Chariot of Prayer be set, and after a pull or two the mercy comes not, their faith jades, and they give over the work; others are constant, but not instant; they continue to pray, but pray themselves cold, they grow lifeless and listless in the work, as if they looked for nothing to come of it; we must joyn both together, or expect benefit from neither.

Sect. 2.

2*ly*, I proceed to the second thing promised, *viz.* to shew why we must pray with all perseverance, which take in these particulars. *First*, It is strictly commanded, 1 *Thess.* 5. 17. *Pray without ceasing*; that is, without fainting; so our Saviour, *Luk.* 18. 1. *He spake a Parable unto them to this end, that men ought alwayes to pray, and not to faint:* Mark, not only *that they might*, but *ought*. It is indeed a high priviledge to us, and a low stoop in the high God, to give us leave thus to lie at his door, and to suffer the cry of our prayers to be ever sounding in his Ears; we, I am sure, could not like to have Beggars knocking day and night at our doors: But so infinitely good is God, that he doth not only allow us this boldness, but also commands it, that the fear of a sin might move us, if the loss of a priviledge will not. *Secondly*, This Perseverance in Prayer is highly commended: Indeed Perseverance crowns every Grace, and commends every Duty; it is not our faith and hope, but *to hold fast our confidence, and the rejoycing of our hope firm to the end that God looks at*, Hebr. 3. 6. Not the seeming zeal and swiftness of our motion in the wayes of God at our first start and setting forth; but the constancy of a well-breath'd soul in holding on his course till the Race be finished, that Christ commends. *If ye continue in my words, then are ye my Disciples indeed*, John 8. 31. So in Prayer; not the short spurts of an inconstant zeal, that begins to pray (as they say the *French* do to fight) like thunder and lightning; but if the first Charge carries it not, then they quail, and are quite cow'd in their spirits. No, it is not this soft metal, whose edge is thus easily turn'd, that God likes in Prayer; but a zeal temper'd and hardned so with resolution, that makes it cut through all delayes and difficulties; this God highly commends: It got *Jacob* the name of a *Prince*, so nobly he behav'd 2.

himself in this Duty, holding it out till break of day with God, and then would not let him go, till he had blessed him. *Thirdly*, It is that which God intends by his delayes, and seeming denials; why deals he thus with his people? Surely it is to put their graces to the Trial, whether they will quit the siege for a few repulses, or fall on with more courage; he holds his peace, to make them cry the louder; steps aside, to make them more eagerly hunt after him. He layes Blocks before the wheel of their prayers, to try their mettle how well they will draw, when it seems a dead pull, and the mercy comes not at their prayer. Now two things God aims at especially by his Peoples perseverance in prayer. *First*, His own Glory. *Secondly*, Their Advantage; these two are never severed. *First*, His own Glory: What fairer occasion can the Christian have in his whole life to honour God, than by holding fast his Integrity, and keeping his Allegiance to God firm, when he seems to be neglected, yea, forsaken of him? Certainly God would never have put *Job* to so much trouble, nor have made him pray and stay so long for the gracious issues of his Providence, but to glorifie himself in the faith and patience of his faithful servant. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord*, saith the *Apostle James*, *Chap.* 5. Truly we could not have heard so much of his patience, if we had not heard so much of his troubles; had God put an end sooner to them, he might have had more ease, but not God more honour; this was it that God was pleased with, and counted himself highly honoured by; that Satan with all his wits and wiles could not make *Job* give over praying, much less, fall of cursing God: No, not when God broke him with his tempest, and seemed not to regard him or his prayers. It pleaseth us most, when our prayers make the shortest Voyage; when they are at Heaven, and back again with an Answer quickly; but it glorifies God most, when he layes an Embargo (as I may so say) upon our prayers, that no Answer comes from Heaven to us, and yet we will send more after them, as *Jacob* did *Benjamin* after his other son, who was then prisoner in *Egypt*: When the poor soul will not be taken off the duty by any intervening discouragements, but presseth harder upon God from his seeming denials; this is indeed to give glory to God. *Blessed is he that hath not seen, and yet thus believes.* *Secondly*, God by his Peoples persevering long in Prayer, before he gives in his gracious Answer, intends them

them no ſmall Advantage. *Firſt*, He uſually payes them uſe for their forbearance; the longer they pray, the more redundant the mercy is when it comes. Such a mercy that comes as an Anſwer of perſevering prayers, is compared to the Husbandmans gains at Harveſt, which abundantly recompenceth his whole years patience. *In due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not*, Gal. 6. 9. The Breaſt is filling for the Child, while the mother is ſleeping; God ſometimes ſeems to ſleep, and forget his poor Children that cry to him, but he is preparing the fuller mercy for them. *Secondly*, Such mercies as are got with longeſt and greateſt difficulties, they come with ſweeteſt manifeſtations of Divine Love. *O woman great is thy Faith!* Matth. 15, This poor woman had not her requeſt ſo ſoon granted as ſome others, but ſhe loſt nothing by it; for with the recovery of her Child (which was all her Errand) ſhe carries away with her a high teſtimony from Chriſts own mouth to the truth and eminency of her grace; ſhe who was at firſt called a Dog, is at laſt owned for a dear Child. *Thirdly*, Such mercies as are the iſſue of perſevering prayers, they are received uſually with more joy and thankfulneſs than others, partly, becauſe the Chriſtians deſires are more intenſe and ſharp, by long ſtaying and earneſt praying for them; and ſo taſtes more ſweetneſs in the mercy, as he that comes hungry from a long Journey at Plow, reliſheth his food better than another, that hath not whetted his appetite with any labour or exerciſe. And alſo, becauſe ſuch mercies give diſappointment to the Chriſtians many fears which their long ſtay occaſioned; when God is long a coming, we are prone to queſtion whether he will come at laſt or no. *Will the Lord caſt off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* Pſal. 77. See how many ſad thoughts gathered about this good mans heart; which, though they did not overthrow his Chariot of Prayer, yet clogg'd his wheels, and made him drive with an heavy heart. Now for a mercy to break out of ſo dark a Cloud, it muſt needs bring ſuch a glory with it, as to raviſh the ſoul with joy, and enlarge it into thankfulneſs. Thoſe Judgments amaze and diſpirit ſinners moſt, which come after long Peace and Proſperity, when they think the danger is over, and bitterneſs of death is even paſt: As in *Hamans* Caſe, who was ſent to the Gallowes after he had vaunted how he was invited to the Queens Banquet;

this strange turn of his Affairs, made it a double death to him. So mercies that surprize the Saint after he hath pray'd long, and can hear no tydings that they are on their way. O how it affects his heart with joy and gratitude! The *Church* had prayed *without ceasing* for *Peter* in Prison, but still he is there, even to the very time when *Herod* would have brought him forth (probably to his execution.) Now when he came himself to bring them the joyful News their prayers were heard (while they were instant at the work) it is said *they were astonished*, Acts 12. 16. *Fourthly*, They are usually more holily used and improved; for God holds his People long at prayer for a mercy, many times for this very end, to prepare and season their hearts; that when they have it, they may know the better how to employ it for his glory, and their own good. None are more careful to husband a great Estate, than those who are at most pains to get it. *Hannah* pray'd long for a son, but none is given; this makes her adde a *Vow* to her *prayer*; *If thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and will give thine hand-maid a Man-child, then will I give him unto the Lord all the days of his life*, 1 Sam. 1. 11. Happy was it for this good woman, she had not her desire sooner; if she had received him at first, haply she had never given him back to God again. The Lord sometimes forbears to give a mercy to us, only to get us deeper into bonds to lay it out for him when we have it. 5ly. The last Advantage that comes to the Christian by Perseverance in Prayer, is, when the mercy is at last denied, and it is this; it will enable and dispose him to bear the denial more meekly and holily than another. He that is short-spirited, and cannot wait on God for a mercy, will not easily submit to him in a denial; whereas, he that keeps up a spirit of prayer for it, when God comes to take away the Subject of his prayer, will acquiesce now, he sees God hath fully declared his Will in the thing. *David* and *Job* are pregnant instances for this: *Job* lets not a day pass without prayer for his Children; and how does the man behave himself when they are slain? Doth he fret and fume? Doth he curse God for making them a sacrifice, for whom he had offered so many sacrifices? No, he meekly submits to his holy Will, he opens not his mouth against him, but in praises to him: So *David*, when his Child was dead, (for whom while living, he ceased not passionately to pray) to shew how well satisfied he was with Divine Providence; he washeth

eth his blubbard Cheeks, puts off his mourning Apparel, and goes to the houſe of God to worſhip, 2 *Sam.* 12. 20. Prayer is a great heart-eaſer; it breaths out thoſe diſtempered paſſions, which being bound up in others, break out, when God at any time croſſeth them in their wills.

SECT. 3.

Thirdly, HAving ſhewn why we are to perſevere in Prayer, I come now to the third place to preſs the Duty home. Chriſt beſtowed a Parable on his Diſciples for this very end, to ſhew that men ought alwayes to pray, and not to faint; ſurely then it deſerves an Exhortation. Now to enforce the Exhortation, take theſe five particulars into your Conſideration. 3.

Firſt, The prevalency of Perſeverance in Prayer; this is emphatically expreſt by that queſtion of our Saviour in his Parable upon this Subject. *Luk.* 18. *Shall not God avenge his own Elect, that cry night and day unto him, though he bear long with them?* As if he had ſaid, Can you think that God will ſend away thoſe who are ſo near and dear to him, his own Elect with a denial; and that when he hath made full proof of their Faith and Patience, in waiting long upon him for an Anſwer? *I tell you* (ſaith Chriſt) that he will avenge them ſpeedily. Men ſeek to pleaſe their old Cuſtomers that are conſtant to their ſhop, whoever elſe they ſend away; ſo will God thoſe that are in conſtant Trading with him at the Throne of Grace. *They that wait upon the Lord, ſhall not be aſhamed.* *David* is careful for our encouragement to let us know how well he ſped after his long waiting at Gods door. *Pſal.* 40. 1. *I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry: Hebrew*; In waiting I waited; that is, I ſtaid waiting long, and at laſt he came: But *David* was a Favourite, may others look to ſpeed as he did? ſee *ver.* 3. *Many ſhall ſee it, and truſt in him.* Anſwer of prayers, is a Covenant-priviledge; it is not a Monopoly given to one or two; but a Charter granted to the whole Corporation of Saints to the end of the World. *Pſal.* 102. 17. *He will regard the prayer of the deſtitute, and not deſpiſe their prayer.* Now mark what follows, *This ſhall be writ for the Generation to come,* ver. 18. 1.

Secondly,

2. *Secondly*, Thy perſevering in Prayer, will help to evidence thy ſtate to be gracious. The Hypocrite is oft uncaſed here; *will he pray alwayes?* Job 34. Many will come into a Workmans ſhop, and take up his Tools to work with them for awhile, and lay them down again by and by, who would never yield to be bound to his Trade, and ſerve out an Apprentiſhip at it. Thus an unſound heart will be medling with this duty now and then, but grows weary of the work at laſt, eſpecially if he be made to wait long for an Anſwer. *Saul* prayes to God, and becauſe he hears not from him, goes at laſt to ſeek to the Devil; obſerve what effect Gods ſilence, frowneſs, and ſeeming denials produce in thy heart, and thou mayſt know the temper of thy ſpirit thereby. Do they wear off thy edge to prayer, or ſharpen it? Do they make thee fall off, and ſend thee away from Gods door (as ſome ſturdy Beggers go from ours, when denyed an Alms) with clamours in thy mouth, and diſcontent in thy heart, reſolved to beg no more there? Or do they make thee fall on with more courage, and enkindle thy affections to God and this duty more ardently; as the Suitor, whoſe love is heightned by repulſes, and importunity doubled by being obſtructed and oppoſed? Truly if thou findeſt the latter, thou mayſt conclude, if this inſtant conſtancy in Prayer be for ſpiritual bleſſings (Chriſt and his ſanctifying graces) that Divine vertue, and that good ſtore hath gone from Chriſt into thy ſoul. *O woman, great is thy Faith!*

3. *Thirdly*, Conſider the great folly of fainting in Prayer; thou doſt a fooliſh and irrational Act: Haply thou art in a deſerted condition, prayeſt for comfort, but none comes; for victory over ſuch a temptation without, or corruption within; but art foyled in both, for all thy praying; therefore thou firſt fainteſt in the duty, and then giveſt it over: What egregious folly is this? Becauſe mercy comes not in all haſt to thee, therefore thou wilt run from it, which thou doſt in ceaſing to pray. When the Fiſher miſſeth his draught, he doth not preſently give over his Trade, but falls a mending his Net. O ceaſe not to pray, but mend thy praying; ſee at what hole the Fiſh went out, the mercy was loſt; double thy diligence, and all ſhall be well at laſt; if thy pain continues while the plaiſter is on, doſt think it will ceaſe when it is taken off! whatever the mercy is thou wouldſt have, muſt it not come from Gods hands? Now, will God give the mercy to thee, who rejecteſt his counſel

for

for the obaining of it? Is not Prayer, and that with all Perseverance, the way he directs all his people to take? Suppose a Physitian who is sent for to a sick Patient, should give the Messenger an Electuary to carry back with him, and saith, it will be some time before I come my self to the sick man; but charge him to take a good quantity of this, as oft as he finds himself ill every day, till I come, and he shall do well. Now the Patient begins to follow his Physitians directions; but staying longer than he likes before he comes, and finding his trouble continue, sets it away, and takes no more of it. The Physitian at last sets forth, and as he is on his way to him, hears of it, turns back, and comes not at him; so the poor man dies by his own hasty folly. Truly, this is our case, God for Reasons best known to himself, stayes some while before he comes to his tempted distressed servants for their deliverance; but leaves order when any of them aile any thing (so the word Καμοπαθεῖ, *James* 5. 13. signifies) that they should pray, apply themselves to the use of this duty; yea, continue the spiritual constant use of it till he comes; and withall assures us, he will come soon enough to save us. Now what folly is it to cast off this means so strictly prescribed? Surely though there were nothing else, this is enough to turn God back, when on his way of mercy to do us good.

Fourthly, Consider it is as sinful as foolish to give over this duty. *Thou castest off fear, and restrainest Prayer before God*, Job 15. 4. It is a high crime for one trusted with a Castle for his Prince, to deliver it cowardly into his Enemies hand, especially, if he hath provision where withall to defend it. Now hath not God provided sufficiently to enable the Christian to maintain this duty against all the Armies of Men and Devils, Afflictions and Temptations that can oppose it? Princes are most careful to enforce and supply Frontier Castles above others with all necessaries for defence, because most assaulted. Prayer is a duty that is as hard laid at by Satan as any, and hath many other difficulties that render it no easie matter for the Christian to be instant and constant at it. God hath considered this, and accordingly provided succour. He gives his Spirit to help the Christian (because of his many infirmities) what, and how to pray; who if he be used kindly, will not be wanting to lift with him in the work; and while the Spirit is ready to pray in him, Christ is as ready in Heaven to pray for him; who also sends the precious promises of the Gospel (as 4.

Messengers

Messengers into a besieged Town) to assure the soul, relief is coming from Heaven to him, be the affliction or temptation never so great and formidable that besets it. Now to faint in the work, and by giving over the duty, to open the City-gates of his soul, for Satan to enter and triumph over God with his insulting blasphemies. O what gracious soul that hath any spark of loyalty in his breast unquench't to his God, doth not tremble at the thought of such a treasonable Action! We cannot cast off Prayer, but we cast some dishonourable reflexion upon God; for as one saith well, Every real defect in the Creature proceeds from an imaginary defect which he falsly supposeth to be in God. Men first conceive unworthily of God, and then carry themselves unworthily and undutifully to him. Now the causes from which this fainting in Prayer proceeds, are all evil and bitter, as by and by will appear.

5. *Fifthly*, And lastly, As it is foolish and evil, so it is of dangerous consequence to our selves to faint, and cease to pray. *First*, It is the ready way to bring some stinging affliction upon us; this is the best that can come of it. Art thou a servant of God, and flyest from his face? expect a storm to bring thee back to thy work. Art thou a Child, and playest the Truant? look that thy heavenly Father will send thee to School with a Rod at thy back. *Secondly*, Cease to pray, and thou wilt begin to sin. Prayer is not only a means to prevail for mercy, but also to prevent sin. *Pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* The Thief comes when the Candles are out, and all the house in their Beds: Christ could not keep his Disciples awake at their Devotions; and how soon were they put to the Rout when the Tempter came? when the Courtier in a discontent withdraws, and gives over his attendance at Court, he is more easily wound in to disloyal practises against his Prince. Discontent softens the heart to receive sinful impressions from the Tempter. *Thou castest off fear, and restrainest Prayer before the Lord*, Job 15. 4. *Eliphaz* his Doctrine was true, though his Application was false; when *Saul* gave over in a Pet to pray to God, then he sought to a Witch. Sins of Commission are the usual punishments that God inflicts on persons for sins of Omission; he that leaves a duty, may fear to be left to commit a crime; he that turns his ear from the Truth, takes the ready course to be given over to believe Fables, 2 *Tim.* 4. 4. He that casteth off Prayer,

Prayer, 'tis a wonder if you find him not ere long caſt into ſome foul ſin.

Sect. 4.

THE fourth and laſt thing propounded, was a word of Counſel for the Chriſtians help and direction in this difficult work of Perſeverance in Prayer. Now this will I ſuppoſe be beſt perform'd, by laying before you the ſeveral cauſes of a perſons falling off from this duty, or fainting in it, and ſo to fit the directions accordingly; all Diſeaſes are not cured with the ſame medicine; neither are Catholick remedies ſo effectual, as thoſe which reſpect the particular humour from which the diſtemper ariſeth. Now the Cauſes of non-perſevering in Prayer, are divers. 4.

Firſt, Sometimes the Cauſe is want of a laſting and enduring motive or principle to keep and hold us conſtantly to the duty: When the Spring is down, the Watch muſt needs ceaſe going; for that fails that gave the wheels their motions. That ſometimes which ſets the Creature to Prayer, is not pure obedience to the Command, but a deſire to ſome particular mercy, which if obtain'd, the Fiſh being caught, the Net is laid aſide; or if he prays long, and hath it not, he grows weary of the work, and lets it fall: Be ſure Chriſtian therefore to pray in obedience; bind the duty upon thy conſcience, and thou wilt not eaſily ſhake it off. *God forbid* (ſaith *Samuel*) *I ſhould ſin in ceaſing to pray for you*, 1 Sam. 12. He had little encouragement from them he prayed for to continue at the work, but his obedience to God to whom he pray'd held him to it. This is a ſtrong Fence to hedge in the heart indeed; we cannot break thorow this Hedge, but we ſhall feel the Thorns in our ſide. A gracious ſoul dreads nothing more than guilt: Tell him it is a ſin to ceaſe praying, and you ſay enough: What though God anſwers not my prayer, his ſilence to my prayer muſt not make me ſilent not to pray. Prayer is ſtill a duty; God is not bound to anſwer preſently when we pray, but we are bound to pray, though he doth not anſwer. *All this is come upon us* (ſaith the *Church*) *yet have We not forgotten thee; neither have We dealt falſly in thy Covenant*, Pſal. 44. 17. Remember Chriſtian thou art a Covenant-ſervant, and one thing thou art as 1.

such bound to do, is to pray to thy God without ceasing, 1 *Thes.* 5. This will defend thee against any motion that the Tempter suggests to the contrary: The Beggar knocks awhile at the Rich mans door, and if he be not served, away he goes: But the servant in the house, though he be hungry, doth not run away presently from his Master, because he hath not his Dinner so soon as he desires.

2. *Secondly*, Sometimes this not persevering in Prayer comes from pride. *This evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?* 2 Kings 6. 33. What a haughty spirit was here! Pride likes not to wait, but to be waited on. He in the Gospel was ashamed to beg, much more to stand long at the door upon a begging errand. Now, though this be a disease which a Saint is more free from than other men; yet there are dregs enough still within him to royle and distemper his spirit, if he be not daily evacuating and purging them out; it will not therefore be amiss, to leave a few soul-humbling Considerations in your hands, which you may be often taking, especially when you feel any grudgings of this sin about you, and your hearts begin to grow discontented, that God makes you stay so long for any mercy prayed for.

First, Consider what it is to pray; it is to go a begging for an Alms, not to demand a debt: Now doth it become thee in so poor a condition, and about such a work, to be so quick and short with thy God, if you can live without being beholden to God, why then do you at all come to his door? If you cannot, why then do you not wait more patiently for his pleasure? Should he wrong thee, if he beat thee from his door? Why then art thou no more thankful for his leave to wait there, though thou beest not presently served?

Secondly, Consider who he is thou prayest to; Is he not the great and glorious Majesty of Heaven and Earth? And is not this one piece of the State he looks to be served in by his poor Creatures? How long did *Mordecai* sit at the Kings Gate, before he had that which he waited for? Is it not time enough for the servant to be set at Dinner, after he hath waited at his Masters Table? Were it not unsufferable sauciness in the servant to complain his Master sate too long, and required too much waiting at his hands? This is the language of our hearts, when we think much to stay Gods time for a mercy. Is he not a righteous holy God? surely he doth thee no wrong to make thee pray, and that long, for a mercy which thou

thou deſerveſt not when it comes at laſt. Is he not wiſer than thou, to know how to time his mercies? *Shall the Earth be forſaken for thee? and ſhall the Rock be removed out of its place?* Job 18. 4. Wilt thou have God overthrow the courſe of his Providence, which he thinks fit, to gratifie thy impatient ſpirit? ſurely this is to charge God fooliſhly with ſome Errour in his Government. In a word, Is not he a faithful God, though he comes not ſo ſoon to thy relief as thou wouldſt have him? Where did he give thee leave to date his promiſes, and ſet the day of payment? No, he hath promiſed to anſwer his Childrens Prayers, but concealed the time of performance of his promiſe, on purpoſe to keep them in a waiting poſture; and therefore he breaks not his promiſe when he detains a mercy, but thou forgetteſt thy duty not to wait. God is not unfaithful, but thou art faithleſs and unbelieving.

Thirdly, Have not as good as thy ſelf prayed, and that as long as thou, before they have received an Anſwer; and yet have not thus behav'd themſelves? Look into the Generation of Seekers, and thou wilt find that God hath exerciſed their patience as well as thine. Haſt thou ſtood at Gods door longer than many of thy Brethren have done? Remember *Job*, *David*, and *Heman*, how many troubles came over their heads, what ſad tydings they did hear? Diſmal Afflictions did they endure before the day broke, and Divine Providence cleared up! Shall God raiſe a Cauſy for thee to walk by thy ſelf dry-ſhod, while theſe, and thouſands beſides, have taken many a weary ſtep through the deep ſloughs of Affliction, before they could come to fair way? When God led *Iſrael* far about, and made it a journey of forty years from *Egypt* to *Canaan*, it had been great pride for any among them, to have deſired God to lead him a ſhorter way thither than all his Brethren. *David* deſired no more at Gods hands, than to fare as his Fellow-Saints did. *Pſal.* 119. 132. *Be merciful unto me as thou uſeſt to do unto thoſe that love thy Name.* Nay, doth not Chriſt himſelf, an example beyond all example, wait, and that long, even in Heaven it ſelf for an anſwer to his Prayers? He hath been already above a thouſand years there at prayer for his Church, and againſt his Enemies, and hath not as yet received the full of his deſires; but ſtill is expecting till the one be ſaved, and the other made his foot-ſtool. Who art thou that thou ſhouldſt have ſo high an opinion of thy ſelf, as to look God ſhould make all ſtay, and trade for

Time, while thou alone for ready money?

Fourthly, Consider whether thou didst never make God wait on thee before his suit could be heard, though he begg'd not for his benefit but thy own. Did God wait in thy carnal state upon thee, that he might at last be gracious to thee, and thinkest thou much to wait at prayer now on him?

3. *Thirdly,* This not persevering in prayer, proceeds oft from unbelief. The Creature prayes, God is silent, and no answer comes: Now thinks Satan is my time come to do this person a mischief; and therefore he labours to perswade the Creature, that there is no mercy to be expected from God. If, saith the Tempter, God had meant to come, he would have been here before now. So many dayes and months are now gone, and no newes of his approach; thou hast stayed too long to meet with disappointment at last, give over, and take some other course. Thus he dealt with our Saviour; no enemy appear'd in the Field for forty dayes, and then he appears. This is his way with the Saints also; he lets them alone while he thinks they are softned into a compliance, by long standing upon duty, and hopes their Ammunition grows low; then he comes to parly with them, and take them off from waiting upon God, by starting many fears and doubts in their thoughts, concerning the power, mercy, and truth of God; so that the poor Christian is at last put to a stand, and knows not whether he should pray, or not pray; or if he holds up the duty, yet not his heart in it; he prays faintly, and with a kind of despair, as the poor widow that made ready her last handful of meal with no other thoughts, than of dying when she had eat it. Thus he prayes, but lots upon nothing but death and misery to follow it. O this is sad praying, to expect no good from God in the performance. Unbelief is a soul-enfeebling sin; it is to prayer, as the Moth to the Cloth, which bites the very Threads asunder, and crumbles it to nothing; it wastes the souls strength, that it cannot look up to God with any hope. *Nehem.* 6. 9. *They made us afraid, saying, their hands will be weakned.* Resist therefore Satan stedfast in the faith; never let thy heart suffer the power, mercy or truth of God to be call'd into question; thou hadst as good question whether he can cease to be God. These Attributes of the Divine Nature, are to thy Faith, like the stone to *Moses*, which *Aaron* and *Hur* put under him to sit upon; they will sustain thy spirit that thou shalt not faint,

faint, or grow weary at the work, though God makes thee wait till the going down of the Sun. O this waiting poſture highly pleaſeth God, and never puts the ſoul to ſhame. *Mary*, that ſtayed by the Sepulchre, though ſhe miſt her Lord there, got at laſt a happy ſight of him. *Quæramus & nos Chriſtum* (ſaith one upon the place) *ex fide, & aſtabit nobis licet non illicò eum agnoverimus.* Let us but ſeek Chriſt in faith, and he will at laſt be with us, though we do not preſently ſee him.

Fourthly, Some perſevere not in prayer, becauſe they have their eye upon ſome other than God, from whom they expect help; it is no wonder he gives over praying, who thinks he hath another ſtring to his Bowe. While the carnal heart prayes for deliverance, he hath other projects in his head how to wriggle himſelf out of the bryars in which he is caught; and on theſe he layes more ſtreſs and weight, than on God to whom he prays; therefore at laſt he leaves praying, to betake himſelf to them; whereas another that looks for all from God, and ſees no way to help himſelf, but by calling in God to his aid, will ſay as *Peter* to *Chriſt* (asking his Diſciples whether they would leave him as others had done) *Lord, whither ſhall we go, Thou haſt the words of eternal life?* I know not another door to knock at (ſaith the poor ſoul) but thine; the Creature hath it not to give, but thou haſt: I will therefore never leave thee; we know not what to do (ſaid good *Jehoſhaphat*) but our eyes are up unto thee. 4.

Fifthly, It proceeds from a want of inward complacency which the Creature ſhould have in God, and communion with him. *Job* 27. 10. *Will he delight himſelf in the Almighty? will he alwayes call upon God?* He will not alwayes call upon him, becauſe he never did cordially delight in him. We eaſily let go what we take no great content to enjoy; the ſincere ſoul is tyed to God by the heart-ſtrings, his communion is founded in love; and love is ſtronger than death, many waters cannot quench it. A ſtranger may have an Errand that brings him to a mans houſe, but that done, his acquaintance ceaſeth; but a Friend he comes to ſit with him, and the delight he takes in his company, will not ſuffer him to diſcontinue his acquaintance long: Get therefore thy affections but once placed upon God as thy chief good, and the ſpark or ſtone will as ſoon forget the way to their center, as thou the way to thy God in prayer. The Hypocrite uſeth prayer, as we uſe phyſick, 5.

not

not becauſe he loves the taſte of it; the ſincere ſoul as food, it is ſweet to his guſt. *David*, from the inward ſatisfaction he found in the preſence of God, cries out, *Pſal.* 73. 28. *It is good for me to draw near to God*; as one that taſting ſome rich wine, or ſweet morſel layes his hand on his ſtomack (where he finds the chearing of it) and ſaith to the ſtanders by, O it is good; never will ſuch a ſoul part with it, no, he'l ſay as the Fig-tree in *Jotbams* Parable, Shall I forſake my ſweetneſs, and the good fruit that I have found in communion with my God? I will never do it.

CHAP. XVIII.

Speaketh of the publick Spirit which ſhould breath in our Prayers for others, with a Lamentation for the want of it, and an Exhortation to it.

Verſe 18. *And Supplication for all Saints.*

THeſe words contain the ſixth and laſt Branch in the Apoſtles Directory for prayer, and that is the comprehenſiveneſs of the Duty, or the perſons that are to be the Subject of our prayers, *Supplication for all Saints.*

But what? would he have us pray for none but Saints? this cannot be the *Apoſtles* meaning, it being ſo contrary to the mind of Chriſt, from whom he hath his meſſage; Chriſt both bids us pray for our Enemies, and is himſelf our pattern for it; yea *Paul* himſelf teacheth contrary Doctrine to this: 1 *Tim.* 2. 1. *I exhort that prayers and ſupplication be made for all men*; that is, all ſorts

sorts of men, Faithful and Infidels, Friends and Enemies; so then Saints are not here named as the Adequate and only Subject of our prayers; but as a principal *Species*, a sort of persons, whom we are in an especial manner to carry in our prayers to God, whom if we do but remember, we shall not easily forget to pray for others also, because, as *Augustine* saith, *Numerus sanctorum de numero impiorum semper est auctus*: The Saints number is encreased and taken out of the number of the wicked. In praying for *Babylon*, we pray for *Jerusalem*; the more that are pray'd out of sin, the more are pray'd into Christ: We shall wind up our Discourse upon this Subject upon these three bottoms.

First, We must shew a publick spirit in prayer, by praying for others as well as our selves. 1.

Secondly, Of all whom we remember in our prayers, Saints must not be forgot. 2.

Thirdly, In praying for Saints, we must be careful to comprehend and incircle all Saints. 3.

SECT. I.

FIrst of the *first*, The Christian ought to have a publick spirit in prayer; this is a duty of common interest, in which others are to share with our selves, like the Buckets that hang in our Houses, which are for the use of the whole Town, when any House is on fire. The Spirit of prayer is a publick Treasure, though laid up in some few hands; all cannot pray, therefore all should be prayed for: I say, it is the Saints duty, not a favour upon courtesie, which may *ad libitum*, be done, or left undone; we sin and transgress the Law of prayer, if we do it not; *God forbid*, saith *Samuel*, *That I should sin in ceasing to pray for you*, 1 Sam. 12. *Paul* writes himself a Debtor to his Brethren in this respect, *We are bound to thank God always for you*, 2 Thes. 1. 3. He acknowledges it due debt; in another place, He *thanks God that he hath them in remembrance always*; so sensible he was of the weight of this duty, that he thinks God for giving of him a heart to perform it. 1.

First, It is one end why the Spirit of prayer is given us; the gifts of the Spirit are to be employed according to the mind and intent 1.

intent of the Donor. If a man bequeaths Houſe and Land to another, but charges the Eſtate with ſuch a payment for the uſe of the poor; he forfeits his Legacy, that fulfills not the will of the dead. God intends the good of others in all his gifts to particular Saints; the way to loſe our gift, is to hoard it up, and not lay it out for the end it was given. *The Manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit with*, 1 Cor. 12. 7. How ſhould we profit others by this gift of the Spirit, if not by praying for them? That Spirit which ſtirs us up to pray for our ſelves, will, if we quench it not, ſend us on the ſame Errand for others; yea, in ſome caſes, for others before our ſelves; for their ſpiritual good, before our own temporal; for the publick good of a Community, before the private good of our ſingle perſon; as in *Moſes* his caſe, who would not be taken off praying for *Iſrael*, to be made great upon their ruines; indeed that offer from God, *Let me alone, and I will make of thee a great Nation*, was only probatory to try whether *Moſes* would prefer his own ſtake before that peoples; and God was highly pleaſed with his ſelf-denial.

2. *Secondly*, The Law of love binds it as a duty upon us; we are commanded to *love our Neighbour as our ſelf*; that [*as*] imports a parity for kind, though not for proportion; for manner, though not for meaſure; I muſt love my Neighbour as truly, though not as ſtrongly as my ſelf. Now how do we ſhew real love to our ſelves, if we pray not for our ſelves? *Our Saviour* expounds our love to our Enemy, by praying for him. *Matth.* 5. 44. *Love your Enemies, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you.* We may give an Alms to an Enemy, and not love him; 'tis eaſier to draw out our purſe, than to draw out our ſoul to the hungry, as the *Prophet* phraſeth it, in prayer we draw out our ſouls. If a man ever ſpeaks or does any thing ſincerely, ſurely it is when he directs his ſpeech to God in prayer, ſaith *Lucas Brugenſ.* upon the place; therefore God chooſeth this of praying for our Enemies, as the ſureſt Teſtimony for our loving of them; and truly he that wiſheth well only to himſelf, may be well reckoned among the moſt degenerate of Mankind; one well compares ſuch a ſelf-lover to the Hedge-hogge, that laps himſelf within his own ſoft Doune, and turns out Briſſels to all the World beſides.

Uſe.

Use. This shews the largeness of Gods bountiful heart; he gives his children not only leave to ask for themselves, but for others; this is not the manner of men, we count it too much boldness to beg for themselves, and others also. If a poor man, when he hath got his Alms, should then beg for all his Neighbours, where should he find the man that would bid him welcome? But behold here the immensity of divine goodness, who gives us leave to bring our Neighbours pitcher with our own to his door; yea, commands it, and takes it ill when we steal to prayer upon our own private Errand, and leave the thought of others necessities behind us: Why shouldst thou Christian stand in doubt, whether God will supply thy own wants, when he commands thee to intercede for others? *Use.*

Sect. 2.

2*ly*, A Lamentation may be taken up for the narrowness of our spirits in prayer, some indeed are so far from praying for others, that they have not learnt to shew so much mercy to themselves; yea, live in such an Estate of Alienation from God, wherein they cannot pray for themselves, or their dearest Relations. O how many prayerless fathers have we that are cruel to their own flesh? Husbands to the wives of their own bosome? Ask whether they love them, they will tell you, yes that they do, as their own souls; and you may believe them, for they serve them no worse than they do their own souls: A time is coming, wherein they will know, one hearty prayer found upon the File for their Relations, would speak more for their love they pretend towards them, than all the Baggs of money which they fill for them: Others, if they shew a little natural affection to their own flesh, and Domestick Relations, yet their love hath much ado to get over their own Thresholds, to enquire how it fares with others. O how little do they feel their Neighbours pains? How seldom do they spread them with any real sense upon their hearts before the Lord? Or if their eye affects their heart with what is presented so near unto them in the afflictions of their next-door Neighbour; yet how few discover such a publick spirit, as to carry upon their hearts the miseries of those that are at further distance, so as to be faithful Remembrancers to the Lord for them? Blessed *Paul* was 2.

affected with, yea, had *a great conflict for those that had never seen his face in the flesh*; even among those that are Christians, O what a decay is there of this publick Spirit! There is great complaint in the World among men of their great losses in our late times of confusion; but I think the Saints are the greatest loosers, who have lost so much of their love and charity; one saith, the World was once destroyed with water, *propter ardorem cupidinis*; for the heat of lust which had set it on a flame, and shall be once again destroyed with fire, *propter teporem charitatis*, for the coldness of love and charity; love it is to the soul, what natural heat is to the body, it gives vigour, and enables for the performance of all offices of life; but alas, how is this kindly heat decay'd among Christians in this old Age of the World? This was long ago foretold by our *Saviour*, Matth. 24. *The love of many shall wax cold*; and no wonder, when self-love, that predatory fire, waxes so hot; foretold also by the *Apostle*, 2 Tim. 3. 2. *In the last dayes men shall be lovers of themselves*; and what a black Regiment follows this Captain, sin, is there to be seen; if once a man make self the top of his aime, farewell loving of, or praying for others; charity cannot dwell in so narrow a house as the self-lovers heart is; yea, it is Diametrically opposed to it, *Love seeks not her own*, 1 Cor. 13. 5. But to turn Lamentation into Exhortation, labour for a publick Spirit in prayer, is there none, O man, that needs the mercy of God besides thy self? Wouldst thou have none saved in another World, nor provided for in this World with thee? Now in remembring others, God will give thee leave thy love should begin at home, though he would not have it end there; look into thy Family, can't thou forget them a day, if thou remembrest thy self? Shall a Believer turn worse than an Infidel? He provides for his house, and thou hast light that tells thee, all thy providing for them is nothing, except God say *Amen*: When thou hast paid thy duty to them, still widen thy charity, and take up thy Neighbours into thy thoughts. O consider what is doing in the Streets and Neighbourhood: How many mayst thou there soon find, pouring out their precious souls as a drink-offering to Satan, the God of this World, in their horrid abominations? O pray that God would stay their bloody hand, before they have irrecoverably made away themselves; then take a further walk in thy meditations to view publick State, and posture of the Nation; see what

mercies

mercies are writ with the golden Pen of Providence upon its forehead, and pay thy humble thanks; what Prognosticks of Judgements coming thou canst observe in the face of the times, and get into the gap before the wrath begins. Did *Abraham* so plead for a *Sodom*, though himself was far enough from the danger of the storm, and not thou for thy own Nation, who art like to be taken in it, if it falls in thy dayes, or thy posterity to rue it, if the cloud impending be not scattered by the prayers of the faithful? Nay, let not the Sea that divides thee, and the other parts of the Earth make thee think thou art not concern'd in their happiness or misery. Let thy prayers walk over the vast Ocean, and bring matter for thy devotions, like the Merchants ship her fraught from afar: Visit the *Churches* of *Christ* abroad; yea, the poor *Indians*, and other ruines of Mankind, that lie where *Adams* sin threw them with us, without any attempt made as yet upon them by the Gospel for their recovery, and carry their deplored condition before the Lord. Our *Drake* is famous for compassing the Earth with his ship in a few years: Thou may'st by thy prayers every day, and make a more gainful Voyage of it too than he did.

Sect. 3.

Thirdly, TAke two or three quickning Considerations to set thee the more feelingly to this work. 3.

First, Thou canst not pray in faith for thy self, if only for thy self: The Lord Jesus taught his Disciples this piece of charity in the Form of prayer he gave them; *When ye pray, say, Our Father*; *Pater, est verbum fidei*; *Noster, est verbum charitatis*: *Father*, is a word of *faith and confidence*: *Our Father*, imports *love and charity*; two necessary graces in prayer. We live by faith, and faith works by love; no prayer can be without faith, nor faith without charity. Christ sends him in the Gospel from the Altar, to reconcile himself to his Brother, before he offered his gift; and why? but that he might be as ready and willing to pray for his Brother, as himself? If we have not charity to pray for our Brother, we cannot expect welcome when we pray for our selves. 1.

Secondly, You do not else make good the character and report which God gives of his children; he speaks of them to be a 2.

blessing to the persons and places round about them. *Isa.* 19. 24. *Israel a blessing in the Land of Assyria*: They are compared to a Fountain, which is a common benefit to serve a whole Town; to stop or trouble which, is a wrong to all that draw their water thence, *Prov.* 25. 26. Now one way wherein the godly are eminently serviceable to others, is, by the interest they have in God, and the prevalency of their prayers with him; *By the blessing of the upright, the City is exalted*, Prov. 11. 11. That is, by their fervent prayers, which draw down a blessing from Heaven upon it; God blesseth *Imperatorie*, by Command. *Psal.* 133. 3. *He commanded the blessing, even life for evermore*: The Saints bless when they pray. *Numbers* 6. 23. *On this wise shall ye bless the people, saying unto them, the Lord bless thee and keep thee.*

3. *Thirdly*, God gives a signal Testimony of his favour to his Saints prayers for others.

1. He doth great things at their request for others; how oft did *Moses* reverse divine plagues that were executed on *Egypt*, even as oft as *Pharaoh* had a heart to beg his prayers? How low did *Abraham* beat the Market for *Sodoms* preservation? He brought it down to ten righteous men, could that wicked place have but afforded that number, it had not been turned to ashes.

2. When their prayers obtain not a mercy for a people, then nothing else can help them; therefore God to express his peremptory Resolution, and irreversible Decree to punish *Israel*, tells them, *Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be to this people*, Jer. 15. 1. Thereby intimating their case desperate; if the prayers of such holy men could not prevent the fall of that Cloud of his wrath impending, much less should they with their own power or policy shift it off; indeed when God is fully set upon a vindictive way, he takes them off from praying, *Jer.* 7. 16. *Pray not thou for this people, for I will not hear thee*; and even in this he shews at what a rate he values his peoples prayers, which makes him loth they should bestow their pains in vain. *Pray not thou for this people*; as if he had said, let them pray if they will, I can without any regret reject their motion; but I am unwilling thou shouldst pray in an unaccepted time, for that which I have no mind to give.

3. When the Saints prayers bring not back with them the mercy for others that is their express Errand, yet God is careful that his people

people should not have the least suspition that the denial proceeds from any disrespect he hath to their persons or prayers, and therefore he sometimes gives the thing they desire, only he changes the Subject. Thus, what God denied *Abraham* for *Ishmael*, he gave him abundantly in *Isaac*; sometimes again, what he denies them for others, he grants to themselves; thus *Davids* prayer for his Enemies, *return'd into his own bosome.*

Sect. 4.

NOW in praying for others: *First*, Get thy heart deeply affected with their state and condition for whom thou prayest, God loves mercy better than sacrifice: To draw out our souls in giving an Almes, is greater charity than to draw out our purse; so in prayer, be sure thy soul be poured out, or else thou art a deceiver, thou wrongest both God and him also thou prayest for, before Christ pray'd for *Lazarus*, he troubled himself; *Behold how he loved him* (said those about him, who were witness to the groans he fetched, and tears he shed:) Then thou wilt pray fervently for others, when thy heart is warm'd into sympathy with them. A Lawyer may shew more Rhetorick in pleading a mans cause, but a brother or dear friend that carries the sense of his condition upon their hearts, must needs discover more affection.

Secondly, Prefer spiritual blessings in thy prayers for others before temporal: Is it a sick Friend on whose Errand thou goest? If health be all thou beggest for him, thou art not faithful to thy friend, he may have that, and be the worse for it; ask a Christ, Grace and Glory for him, and then thou dost something to purpose; surely this our Saviour meant in his method of curing the Palsie man, *Matth.* 9. 2. to be cur'd of his disease; *Be of good cheere* (saith Christ) *thy sins are forgiven*: He first brings him the News of a pardon, as a mercy infinitely more worth than life or limbs, thereby tacitly reproving his friends, who took more care to have his body healed, than his soul saved. Is it the Nation thou art praying for? Aime at more than deliverance from outward judgements and plagues. The carnal *Jewes* could say, *Give us water that we may drink*, Exod. 17. 2. but thought not of their sin, to beg repentance for, and pardon of it; that was the cry of the

the Creature; a Beaſt can low and bellow in a Drought, but this is the voice of a Saint.

Thirdly, Be not diſcouraged in your prayers for others, though an anſwer doth not preſently overtake them; thou pray'ſt for a rebellious Child, or carnal Friend, who yet continue to be ſo; take heed thou doſt not preſently think them paſt grace, and give over the work. *Samuel* ſaw the people he pray'd for, mend but ſlowly, yet hear what he ſaith, 1 *Sam.* 12. *God forbid I ſhould ceaſe praying for you.* I have heard of ſome that have been laid forth, yea buried, before they were dead, by their over haſty friends. Be not thou thus cruel to the ſouls of thy Relations or Neighbours, lay them not out of thy prayers, bury them not in thy thoughts for Reprobates, becauſe thou canſt not perceive any ſign of ſpiritual life in them, though thou haſt many a time ſtretched thy hands in prayer over them; their ſouls thou ſeeſt are yet in their bodies, and ſo long it is not too late for God to breath the life of grace into their ſouls. Again, Is it for the publick thou prayeſt? draw not in thy ſtock of prayer, though thou haſt not ſo quick a return in thy Trade with Heaven for it as thou deſireſt. The fathers labour is not loſt, if his ſon receives the benefit of it; he may be dies before the ſhip comes home he ſent forth, but his child lives to have the gains of that adventure paid into his purſe. Thus one Generation ſowes prayers for the Church, and another reaps the mercy pray'd for.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Sheweth, in praying for others, the Saints are principally to be remembred, and why.

The second Proposition follows.

IN praying for others, we are in an especial manner to remember Saints. The *Apostle* hints this, by making them the instance for all, as the *species famosa*, or chief rank of men for whom we are to pray; and it suits well with *Pauls* Doctrine elsewhere, *Gal.* 6. 10. we are there bid *as we have opportunity, to do good to all, especially to them who are of the Houshold of faith.* Now this of prayer, I take to be one of the most eminent wayes of doing them good; what greater kindness can a man do for his sick friend, than to go to the Physitian for him? By other acts of charity, we give a little out of our own purse; but by praying for the poor Saints, we open Gods Treasury for them. If one should meet a Begger, and out of his purse throw him a few pence; but another tells him I have no money of my own to give, yet I will go to Court, and open your necessitous condition to the King my Master; it were easie to tell which of these does the poor man the greatest kindness; a poor Saint may thus do more for another, though (as *Peter* told the Cripple) he hath neither silver nor gold to give, than he who hath the largest purse of his own; that of *Araunah* is observable, 2 *Sam.* 24. 22. where we have his bountiful offer to King *David, Let my Lord the King take, and offer up what seems good unto him, here be Oxen for burnt-sacrifice*; this was much, and shew'd his heart to be noble and large, s it follows, *ver.* 23. *All these things did Araunah as a King, give unto the King*; yet one thing

thing he did that amounted to more than all this, which was his hearty prayer to God for *Davids* acceptance, and *Araunah said unto the King, the Lord thy God accept thee*; he might have done all the other for fear. A Subject sometimes gives his Prince, because he knows he may take, though he gives it not; but by his praying for him, he discovered his hearty affection to him.

Sect. 1.

1. THere are several weighty Reasons for this Duty. *First*, from God. *Secondly*, from Satan. *Thirdly*, from the Saints prayed for: And *fourthly*, from the Saints praying. *First*, from God. 1. They are the special object of his love; his heart is set upon them, his thoughts and providence are at work continually for them; others indeed do partake of divine bounty, but they may thank the Saints company and neighbourhood for it; when the Gardener waters his beds of flowers, some runs down into the Allies, but had he no flowers there, he would save that pains; when once God hath got his whole Family of Saints home to himself in Heaven, it will quickly be seen what God will do with the rest of the World; God dispenseth the same providence to them both, but not with the same affection, not to the same end: *He is the Saviour of all, but especially of those that believe*, 1 Tim. 4. 3. He saves the Saints with saving purposes; the wicked he saves temporally, to destroy them eternally; he saves them from a present sickness or danger, that they may ripen for hell; as we save our young wood for greater growth, and then cut it down for the fire; now what shall be done for those to whom God declares so much love? we cannot do less than pray for them; by this we comply with God, and shew our content in his choice. 2. God hath made them the proper heirs of all his promises; now promises are the ground of prayer; we are to pray for others, though wicked, not knowing, but God may have a secret purpose of doing them good; but where there is grace, *hic se aperit decretum*, here God breaks open his Decree: the Fountain of his electing grace which ran hitherto under-ground, now bursts forth; so that now you may with fuller confidence pray for such a one. When *Paul* begs prayers, to encourage his friends at the work for him, he assures them

of

of his ſincerity, *Hebr.* 13. 18. *Pray for us, for We truſt we have a good conſcience, willing in all things to live honeſtly.* As if he had ſaid, you pray for one that God will not chide you for mentioning; 'tis an encouragement for a Merchant to adventure, when he puts his ſtock into a good bottome. 3. They are a Generation that alone honour God in the World; indeed God honours himſelf upon others in their preſent luſts and future damnation; he makes their wrath praiſe him here, and his wrath poured on them ſhall praiſe him hereafter; but no thanks to them for all this, for they do their utmoſt to lay the honour of God in the Dirt: But the Saints are a people, who are not meerly paſſive, but active in the praiſing of God, 'tis their Mother-language to bleſs the Name of God; whatever is their work, this is their end and aim: *Whither they eat or drink, to do all to the glory of God.* Now upon this account we are to pray for Saints above others; the firſt thing our *Saviour* teacheth us to pray for, is, that the *Name of God may be hallowed*; in order to which he directs us in the very next words, to pray for his Church and Saints, as thoſe who alone can hallow it; *Thy Kingdom come.*

SECT. 2.

Secondly, FRom Satan; his great ſpight is againſt the Saints: God owns them, therefore he hates them, and ſpits Fire and Brimſtone at them; where God is of one ſide, you may be ſure to find the Devil on the other; indeed they are the only company that ſtand in his way; As for the wicked, he takes himſelf to be advanced, when they are exalted in the World; the father is honour'd, when the child is prefer'd; but the Saints riſing, portends his fall; this makes him bend all his force by temptation or perſecution to procure their ruine, theſe are the Stars he would ſtamp under his feet; the firſt Murder in the World was of a Saint, and *Cain* will kill *Abel* to the end of the World; in all broyles and confuſions of Nations, theſe are the threatned party, therefore they need our prayers moſt. 2.

Thirdly, from the Saints prayed for. 1. They exceedingly deſire prayers; the wicked I confeſs may do this alſo, but 'tis by fits, in a pang of fear or fright; thus *Pharaoh* ſends in all haſte for 3.

Moſes, when the plagues of God are in his Houſe and Fields. The carnal *Jewes* pray *Samuel* to pray for them that they die not; but it was, when terrified with dreadful thunder and rain that fell: 1 *Sam.* 7. yea, *Simon Magus* himſelf ſmitten with horrour at *Peters* words, begs his prayers, *that none of thoſe things which he had ſpoken, might come upon him*; but at another time theſe wretches cared neither for the Saints, nor for their prayers. *Pharaoh*, who deſir'd *Moſes* at one time to pray for him, at another time chaſes him out of his preſence, with a charge never to come at him more; but now the Saints they are very covetous, yea ambitious, of the auxiliary prayers of their Brethren, and thoſe not the meaneſt among them neither; indeed as any is more eminent in grace, ſo more greedy of his Brethrens help; the richer the Tradeſman is, the more he ſets at work for him. *Paul* himſelf, *Rom.* 15.30. is not aſham'd to beg this boon of the meaneſt Saint. *Now I beſeech you Brethren, for the Lord Jeſus his ſake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye ſtrive together with me in your prayers to God for me.* Did you ever hear a Begger at your door, or Priſoner at the grate, beg more paſſionately? *for the Lord Jeſus ſake, for the Spirits ſake*; if ever you felt any warmth in your hearts from the blood of Chriſt, or love of the Spirit comforting of you, *ſtrive*, συναγωνίζεσθε, wraſtle with me, till we together have got the victory, prevailed with God for this mercy. 2. As the Saints are covetous of prayers, ſo they lot upon it that you do pray for them; yea, take up comfort before hand, from the expectation of what they ſhall receive by them. *I know this ſhall turn to my ſalvation through your prayers*, Phil. 1. 19. *I truſt that through your prayers I ſhall be given to you*, Phil. 22. 8. Where *firſt* obſerve *Pauls* modeſty, he ſinks and drowns his own prayers, and expreſſeth his faith on theirs. *Secondly*, his confidence; he doubts not but they will pray, neither does he queſtion the happy return of them into his boſome; as if he had ſaid, if ye be faithful, ye will pray for me; ſo that we break our truſt, and diſappoint our Brethren, if we forget them. *Thirdly*, Saints are the honeſteſt Debtors we can deal with, they will pay you in your own coyn; he that ſhews any kindneſs to a Saint, is ſure to have God for his Pay maſter; for its their way to turn over their debts to God, and engage him to diſcharge their ſcore to man. *Oniſephorus* had been a kind friend to *Paul*, and what does *Paul* for him? to prayer he goes, and deſires God

God to pay his debts. *The Lord give mercy unto the houſe of Oniſephorus; for he oft refreſhed me, and was not aſhamed of my chain.*

Sect. 3.

Fourthly, From the Saints praying, there is no duty God commands, but he payes the Chriſtian well for the performance, and leaves him a loſer that neglects it; there is enough in this duty we are ſpeaking to, that may make it lovely and deſirable in our eye; the beſt of Saints have counted it a great priviledge to be admitted into this Noble Order. *Paul thanks God that without ceaſing he had Timothy in remembrance day and night in his prayers*: But wherein lies this mercy to have a heart to pray for our Brethren? 4.

Firſt, It is a ſingular mercy to be inſtrumental to the grace or comfort of any Saint, much more to be inſtrumental for the glorifying of God; this a gracious heart prizeth highly, though it coſts him dear to promote it: Now in praying, though but for one ſingle Saint, thou doſt both: 2 *Cor.* 1. 11. *You helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift beſtowed upon us, by the means of many perſons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.* *Paul* begging prayers, inforceth his requeſt with a double Argument. 1. From the prevalency of joynt-prayers; when twenty pull at a Rope, the ſtrength and force of every one is influential to the drawing of it; ſo in prayer, where many concur, all help; God looks at every ones faith and fervency exerted in the duty, and directs the anſwer to all. 2. From the harmony of joynt-praiſes; the fuller the Conſort in praiſes, the ſweeter the Muſick in Gods ear; joynt-prayers produce ſocial praiſes; he that concurs to a prayer, and not in returning praiſe, is like one that helps his friend into debt, but takes no care to bring him out.

Secondly, By praying for others, we encreaſe our own joy; when *Paul* ſaw the prayers which he had ſown for the *Theſſalonian Saints*, 1 Theſ. 1. come up in their faith and zeal, he is tranſported with joy, as an incomparable mercy beſtowed upon himſelf: 1 *Theſ.* 3. 9. *What thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your ſakes before our God:* He had watered them with his prayers, God gives increment to their grace; from this his joy flouriſheth, and his heart is ſo raviſhed,

viſhed, that he knows not what thanks to God are enough for the mercy he receives through their hands; truly the reaſon why we gain no more from the graces of our Brethren, is, becauſe we venture no more prayers upon them.

Thirdly, this would be an undoubted evidence to prove our ſelves Saints, could we but heartily pray for them that are ſuch: Love to the Brethren, is oft given as a Character of a true Saint. Now no act whereby we expreſs our love to Saints, ſtands more clear from ſcruples of inſincerity, than this of praying for them. Will you ſay you love the Saints, becauſe you frequent their company, ſhew kindneſs to their perſons, ſtand up in their defence againſt thoſe that reproach them; or becauſe you can ſuffer with them? All this is excellent, if ſincere; yet how eaſie is it for vain glory, or ſome other carnal end, to mingle with theſe? But if thou canſt find thy heart in ſecret (where none of theſe temptations have ſuch an advantage to corrupt thee) let out to God for them with a deep ſenſe and feeling of their ſins, wants and ſorrows, this will ſpeak more for the ſincerity of thy love, than all the former without this.

CHAP. XX.

The Application of the Point.

Uſe. MUST we pray above all for Saints? woe then to thoſe, who inſtead of praying for them, had rather with thoſe, *Iſa.* 59. 15. *make a prey of them*; that inſtead of praying for them, can curſe them, and drink to their confuſion; haply 'tis not under the plain name of Saints, but as wrapt up in the Bears skin of fanatick Puritan, or ſome other name of ſcorn, invented to cover their malice, ſo they can devour and tear them in pieces; the Saints are a ſort of people that none love, but thoſe that are themſelves ſuch; it is a good gloſs of *Jerom*, *Eſtote ſancti, ut oratis pro ſanctis*; be Saints, and then you will pray for

Saints

Saints; the Righteous is an abomination to the Wicked, 'tis a Sect everywhere ſpoken againſt; the feude began at the firſt between *Abel* and *Cain*, and ſo ſpred over the whole World; one Generation takes up the Cudgels againſt them, as another layes it down. *Amilcar* bequeathed his hatred againſt the *Romanes* to his ſon *Hanibal* when he dyed; ſo is the feude tranſmitted by the Wicked from one Generation to another againſt the Saints; nothing can quench their wrath, or take up the quarrel; no moral perfections (which were they in others, would be thought lovely) let the Saint be never ſo wiſe, meek, affable, and bountiful, yet this, that he is a Chriſtian, is a *but*, that will blot all in the wicked Worlds thoughts, *Bonus vir, Cajus Sejus, ſed malus tantum quod Chriſtianus*; was the language in *Tertullians* Age; *Cajus Sejus* had been a good man, if he had not had that without which he could not be good; no near Relation can wear off their ſpight: *Michael* cannot bite in her ſcornful ſpirit, but jears her husband to his face for his zeal before the Lord; in a word, no benefit which accrues to the Wicked by the Saints Neighbourhood (and that is not a little) can make them lay down their hatred; they are the only Bail which God takes to keep a Nation (when under his Arreſt) out of Priſon; they are the cauſe of bleſſings to the Families, Towns and Kingdoms they live in, yet the Butt at which their invenom'd Arrows are level'd againſt; the whole City is againſt *Lot*, not a man among them to take his part, ſo true and conſtant are the wicked to their own ſide. *Tertullian* tells us of ſome Heathen-husbands that liked their wives, though looſe and wanton, and lived with them (when ſuch) before they were converted to Chriſtianity; but when once they had embraced the Faith, and thereby were made chaſte, they put them away; fathers that could bear undutiful rebellious carriages in their children, when once converted, and theſe amended, they turn'd them out of doors; *Ut quiſque hoc nomine emendatur, offendit*, as any were reform'd in their lives by turning Chriſtian, ſo he became an Offendour. It were well, if this were only the Heathens ſin; but by woful experience we find that the true Chriſtian hath not more cruel enemies in the whole World, than ſome be that are of his own Name. The ſharpeſt perſecutions of the Church have been by thoſe that were in the Church; O what a dreadful account will ſuch have to make in the great day, who profeſs the Name of Chriſt,

yet

yet hate his Nature in the Saints! who call Christ Lord, yet persecute his best Servants, and destroy his loyallest Subjects; these are the men that above all other shall feel the utmost of the Lords fiery wrath in the day when he shall plead his Peoples cause, and avenge himself on their Adversaries.

Use 2. Be exhorted to this duty of praying for Saints; you cannot do that which God will take more kindly at your hands. He himself puts this petition into our mouths: *Ask me of things to come concerning my sons*, Isa. 45. 11. Courties frame their Petitions according to their Princes liking; they are careful not to ask that which he is unwilling to give; but when they perceive he favours a person or business, then they are ambitious to present the petition. *Joab* knew what he did, in sending the woman of *Tekoa* to *David*, with a petition wrapt up in a handsom Parable for *Absolom* the Kings son; he knew the Kings heart went strongly after him, and so the motion could not but be acceptable; and is not the Lords heart gone after his Saints? thy prayer for them therefore, must needs come in a good time, when it shall find the heart of God set upon the very thing thou askest; this was it that God was so pleased with in *Daniel*, *chap.* 9. 22, 23. Now in your prayers for the Saints among other things that you pray for them, forget not these.

1. *First*, Pray for their lives; they are such a blessing where they live, that they seldom fall, but the Earth shakes under them; it is commonly a Prognostick of an approaching evil, when God takes them away by death. *Jeroboam* had but one son in whom some good was found; he must dye, and then the ruine of his fathers Family follows, 1 *Kings* 14. 7. When *Augustine* dyed, than *Hippo* falls into the Enemies hands; if the wise man be gone that preserved the City, no wonder if its end hastens; God makes way to let his Judgments in upon the World, by taking the Saints out of the World; when God chambers his children in the Grave, a storm is at hand, *Isa.* 26. It is you see of concernment to do our utmost to keep them among us, especially when their number is so few and thin already, that we may say, as once the *Prophet* concerning *Israel*, *We are as when they have gathered the Summer-fruits, or the Grape-gleanings of the Vintage*, Micah 7. 1. Did we indeed see them come up as thick in our young ones, as they fall in the old,

we

we might ſay, a bleſſing is in them; theſe would be as hope-ſeeds at leaſt for the next Generation; but when a wide breach is made, and few to ſtep into it, this is ominous: At *Moſes* his death, *Joſhuah* ſtood up in his place, and it went well with *Iſraels* Affairs; but when *Joſhuah* dyed, and a Generation roſe up that had not ſeen the wonders God had done for his people, and ſo rebell'd, than they to wrack apace, *Judges* 2. 9, 10.

Secondly, For their liberty and tranquillity: *Pſal.* 122. *Pray for the peace of Jeruſalem, they ſhall proſper that love thee. Jeruſalem* was the place for their publick worſhip; *thither the Tribes went up unto the teſtimony of Iſrael, and to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord*, ver. 4. ſo that by praying for *Jeruſalems peace*, is meant, ſuch ſerene times wherein the people of God might enjoy his pure worſhip without diſturbance; the *Church* hath alwayes had her viciſſitudes, ſometimes fair, and ſometimes foul weather; but her Winter commonly longer than her Summer, yea, at the ſame time that the Sun of peace brings day to one part of it, another is wrapt up in a night of perſecution: Univerſal peace over all the Churches, is a great rarity; and where it is in any part of it enjoyed, ſome unkind cloud or other ſoon interpoſeth; the *Churches* peace therefore is ſet out by *an half hours ſilence*, Rev. 8. 1. When God gave the poor *Jewes* a reviving after a tedious captivity, by moving *Cyrus* to grant them liberty to go and rebuild the Houſe of God; how ſoon did a ſtorm riſe, and beat them from their work? one Prince furthers them, another obſtructs the work. The *Goſpel-Church*, Acts 9. had a ſweet breathing time of peace, but how long did it laſt? this ſhort calm went before a ſudden *herricano* of perſecution that falls upon them, *chap.* 12. Thus have the politick Rulers of the World uſed the Saints, as their carnal intereſt ſeemed to require; one while to countenance, another while to ſuppreſs them; no ſort of people in the world can expect leſs favour from the world, than the *Church*, their only ſafety therefore lies to engage God to eſpouſe their cauſe. 2.

Thirdly, Pray for their love and unity among themſelves; the Perſecutors Sword (bleſſed be God) is not at the Churches throat among us; but are not Chriſtians at Daggers drawing amongſt themſelves? The queſtion in our dayes hath oft been askt, Why the Word preach'd (being as frequent, clear, and powerful, as 3.

any,

any former Age ever enjoy'd in this Nation) hath been no more effectual to convert the wicked, or to edifie the Saints. I will not ſay this is the ſole Reaſon, but I dare deliver it as none of the leaſt Cauſes, and that is the woful diviſions and rents amongſt thoſe that have made greateſt profeſſion of the Truth. 1. For the Saints, it is no wonder they ſhould thrive no more under the Word; for the body of Chriſt *is edified in love*, Epheſ. 4. So long as there is a Feaver upon the body, it cannot nouriſh. The *Apoſtles* themſelves, when wrangling, got little good by Chriſts Sermon, or the Sacrament its ſelf adminiſtred by Chriſt unto them; one would have thought that was ſuch a meal, in the ſtrength whereof (as ſo many *Elijahs*) they might have gone a long journey; but alas we ſee how weak they riſe from it; one denies his Maſter, and the reſt in a fright forſake him; ſo unfit were they in ſuch a temper to make a ſpiritual advantage of the beſt of means. *Again*, for the wicked, 'tis no wonder that the Word prevails no more on them, the diviſions and ſcandals that have ariſen among thoſe that call themſelves Saints, have fill'd their hearts with prejudice againſt the holy truths and wayes of God; Chriſt prayes for his Peoples unity, *That the World may believe* (ſaith he) *that thou haſt ſent me*, John 17. 21. What is oftner in the mouths of many profane wretches, than this? we will believe them, when they are all of one mind; and come over to them, when they can agree among themſelves; who loves to put his head into an houſe on fire? This ſhould methinks ſtir up all that wiſh well to the Goſpel to pray, and that inſtantly, for the re-union of their divided hearts; hot diſputes will not do it, prayer, or nothing can. *Pliny* ſaith of the Pearls called *Uniones*, that their nature (though they be ingendred in the Sea) partakes of the Heavens, more than the Earth; *the God of Peace* can only ſet us at peace; if ever we be wiſe to agree, we muſt borrow our wiſdom from above; this alone is pure and peaceable.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

Sheweth, that not ſome, but all Saints are the Subject of our Prayers and Interſſion; and why.

The third Propoſition.

IN praying for Saints, you muſt pray for all; I do not mean as the *Papiſts*, for quick and dead; prayer is a means to wait upon them in their way, at death then they are at their journies end; prayers are bootleſs for the dead ſinner, and needleſs for the deceaſed Saint; the wicked in that ſtate are beneath, the Saint above our prayers, we cannot help the wicked, the Tree is fallen, and ſo it muſt lie. We read of a change the body ſhall have after death; vile bodies may, but filthy ſouls cannot after death be made glorious; if they go off the body filthy, ſo they ſhall meet it at the Reſurrection; the time to pray for them, is now while they live among you, or never; for death and hell come together to the ſinner. No ſooner *Dives* his wretched ſoul is forced out of his body, but you hear it ſhreak in hell: *Luk.* 16. 22. *The rich man dyed, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment*; but *Abraham* tells him, *there is a gulf fixed*, that forbids all intercourſe betwixt Heaven and him. Now what is that, but an irrevocable Decree with which the wicked are ſealed under everlaſting wrath; if God receive no prayers from them, then not from others for them: And as the wicked are beyond our help, ſo the Saints above all need of our help, for they are in their Port and Haven; prayer implies want, but Saints departed are perfect, called therefore *the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*; we need not beg a pardon for them, for the Lord acquits them, they are *juſt*; not for a ſupply of any good they want, they are *made*

perfect; not to remove any pain they feel, for *the Spirit saith*, *Blessed are they that dye in the Lord, they rest from their labours*; but they who invented this devise, intended it is like, gain to their own purse, rather than benefit to the others souls; 'tis a pick-purse Doctrine, contrived to bring Grist to the *Popes* Mill; but to leave this, they are the living Saints, *your Companions here in tribulation*, that are the Subject of your prayers, and of these we are to incircle the whole community within our remembrance; the *Papists* speak much of a Treasury the *Church* hath, this indeed is the true Treasury of the *Church*, the common stock of prayers with which they all trade to Heaven for one another; *Paul* tells us what a large heart he had, even for those whose *face he never saw in the flesh*, Col. 1. 2. Take a few Reasons for the Point.

1. *First*, We are to love all Saints, therefore to pray for all; love in a Saint, is the picture of Gods love to us; and Gods love looks not a squint to one Saint, more than another; that Image is not of Gods drawing, which is not like himself; nature may erre in its productions, but not God in the grace he begets in his Saints bosome; the new Creature never wants its true nature; if God loves all his Children, then wilt thou all thy Brethren, or art not one of them? when *Paul* commends Christians for this grace of love, he doth it from this Note of Universality, *Ephes.* 1. 15. *After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the Saints*, so *Col.* 1. 4. *Philemon ver.* 5. Now if we love all, we cannot but pray for all; to say we love one, and not pray for him, is a Solicisme: Can a Courtier love his Friend, and not speak to his Prince for him, when he may do him a favour by it? Love prompts a man to do that wherein he may expres the greatest kindnes to his Friend; *Mary* poures the most precious oyntment she hath upon Christ. Prayer, if of the right composition, is the most precious oyntment thou canst bestow on the Saints; save it not for some few, of them that are of thy private society, or particular acquaintance, but let the sweet odour of it fill the whole house of the Church, pray for all.

2. *Secondly*, We are to pray for all Saints, because Christ prayes for all; he carries all their names in his brest-plate: *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word*; he leaves not one of the number out of his remembrance, the elder brother was Priest to the whole Family; so is Christ our elder

elder Brother to the whole Houſhold of Believers: Now Chriſts interceſſion is a pattern for our prayers, we cannot indeed pray for all, as he doth; he prayes for them not only in the lump, but for every individual Saint by name; *I have prayed (Peter) for thee*, Luk. 22. yea, not only for every perſon by name, but for their particular wants and occaſions: *I have prayed that thy faith fail not.* Chriſt takes notice of that very grace, which was in moſt imminent danger, and ſecures it by his interceſſion. O what unſpeakable comfort is this to a Saint, that he in particular ſhould be ſpoken of in Heaven, and every want or temptation he laboureth with, be taken notice of, and provided for by Chriſt his mediation! Thus indeed we cannot pray for all, becauſe we know but few of their perſons, and little of the ſtate and condition of thoſe we know; neither is there need we ſhould, our general ſuffrage and vote is as kindly taken, as if we could deſcend to particular inſtances; God knows the mind of the Spirit in our prayers on earth to be for the ſame things which Chriſt inſiſteth on in his Interceſſion in Heaven.

Thirdly, We muſt pray for all Saints, or elſe we can pray for none. 1. We can't pray really for any, if not for all; he that prays for one Saint, and deſires not good to another, prays not for that one as a Saint; but under ſome other conſideration, as wife, friend, child, or the like (a Saint cloathed with ſuch and ſuch circumſtances) for *à quatenus ad omne valet conſequentia*; he that loves a man, becauſe a man loves all, becauſe the ſame humane nature is found in all, and all Saints have the ſame nature. 2. We cannot pray acceptably for one, except for all; and ſo we wrong thoſe for whom we do pray, by leaving them out for whom we alſo ſhould. *Joſeph* would not hear the *Patriarchs* for *Simeons* releaſe, till they brought *Benjamin* over to him alſo; if thou wouldſt be welcome to God in praying for any, carry all thy Brethren to him in thy devotions, leave none behind. *Are here all thy Children*, ſaid *Samuel* to *Jeſſe*? he would not ſit down, till the ſtripling *David* was fetch't to compleat the company. May be thou art earneſt in prayer for thy near-neighbour Chriſtians, but doſt thou not forget others that are further off? Thou remembreſt the Church of God at home, but doſt thou lay the miſeries of the Churches abroad to heart? What if God ſhould ask thee now, *Are here all thy Brethren?* Are there none but theſe that live un-

der thy eye to be remembred? Have not I Children, and you Brethren elsewhere in the World to be thought upon? The *Jewes* in *Babylon* were not to forget *Jerusalem*, because of the great distance. *Remember the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind*, Jer. 51. 50.

CHAP. XXII.

The *Application* of the Point.

Use 1. What a rich Merchant is the Saint, who hath a stock going in so many hands? in Heaven Christ is hard at prayer for him, on Earth his Brethren; what can this man want? Christ hath such interest his Fathers heart, that he can deny him nothing; the Saints such interest in Christs, that he will not deny them, so the Christians Trade goes smoothly on in both Worlds. Think of this, Christian, for thy comfort, wherever a Child of God is living upon Earth, there hast thou a Factor to traffick with Heaven for thy good; let this help thy faith in putting up thy own private prayers, knowing that thou prayest in a communion and fellowship with others, even when thou art alone in thy Closet, expect an answer to more than thy own prayer; 'tis uncharitableness not to pray for others, and pride, not to expect benefit from the prayers of others.

2. *Secondly*, It teacheth us how inquisitive we should be of the Affairs of our Brethren, and state of the *Church*, that so we may pray with a more bowelly sense of their wants for them: *Nehemiah*, when he heard of some that were come out of *Judea*, enquires how it fared with his Brethren there? and from the sad report he heard of their afflictions and reproaches, is put into a bitter passion, which he emptied with prayers and tears for them, into the bosome of God, *Nehem.* 1. 4. how could he have done this so feelingly, had he not first been acquainted with their distressed condition?

condition? We are many of us asking oft, what News? and reading Books of Intelligence, Forraign and National; but is it as *Athenians*, or as Christians? to fill our heads, or to affect our hearts? to furnish us with matter of Chatt, and talk by the fireside with our Neighbours, or of prayer to our God?

Thirdly, Labour to get a wide heart in prayer for all the Saints; 3.
God (its said) gave *Solomon* a large heart of knowledge and wisdom, as the sand of the Sea, 1 *Kings* 4. 29. Behold a mercy greater than that to *Solomon* is here; a large heart is better than a large head, to do good, then to know it; nothing is more unworthy than a selvish spirit; no selvishness worse than that which is vented in prayer: A Heathen could blame that *Athenian*, who in a drought pray'd for his own City, saying, *O Jupiter rain upon the Fields of the Athenians*; but forgot that his Neighbours wanted as well as himself. Many Heathens were great Admirers of this vertue of Charity; take one instance for all: It was a Law among the *Romans*, that none should come near the *Emperours* Tent in the night upon pain of death; now there was one night a certain Souldier apprehended, standing near the *Emperours* Tent with a Petition to deliver unto him, who was therefore presently to be executed; but the *Emperour* hearing the noise from within his Pavilion, called out, saying, If it be for himself let him dye; if for another, spare his life; being examined, it was found his Petition was for two of his Fellow-Souldiers that were taken asleep on the Watch, so both he escaped death, and they punishment! Was this office of charity so pleasing to an earthly Prince, as to dispense with a Law for its sake? O how acceptable then to our merciful God is it, to intercede for our Fellow-Saints? But the more to provoke you to the exercise of this duty in its full breadth and latitude; *viz.* for all Saints. Consider,

First, This praying for all Saints, will prove thy love to Saints sincere. A man in praying for himself, or his Relations, stands not at that advantage to see the actings of pure grace, as when he prayes for such as have not these carnal dependencies on him; when thou prayest for thy self in want or sickness, how knowest thou that it is any more than the natural cry of the Creature? Is it for thy Family thou prayest? still thy flesh hath an interest in the work, and may help to quicken thee (if it be not the chief spring to set thee a going) but when thy heart beats strongly with a

sense

ſenſe of any others miſery, that hath nothing to move thee, but his Chriſtianity to be his Remembrancer, and thou canſt in ſecret plead with God for him as feelingly, as if thou didſt go on thy own Errand, truly thou breatheſt a gracious Spirit.

Secondly, As it will ſpeak for the truth of thy grace, ſo for the heighth and vigour of it, 'tis corruption that contracts our hearts; they were none of the beſt Chriſtians of whom *Paul* gives this Character, *Phil.* 2. 21. *They ſought their own*; as the heart advanceth in grace, ſo it widens, and grows more publick-ſpirited; the higher a man aſcends a Hill, the larger his Proſpect; one that ſtands upon the ground, cannot look over the next Hedge; his eye is confin'd within the compaſs of his own wall; thus the carnal ſpirit thinks of none but his own eſtate or ſtake, feels not the water till it comes into his own Cabbin, whereas grace elevates the ſoul; and the more grace a man hath, the more it will enable to look from himſelf over into the condition of his Brethren; ſuch a one, he partakes of the nature of the heavenly bodies which ſhed their influences down upon the whole World; eſpecially this would ſpeak grace high in its actings, if theſe circumſtances concur with it. 1. When a perſon is himſelf ſwimming in abundance of all enjoyments, and can then lay aſide his own joy to weep and mourn for, and with any afflicted Saints, though at never ſo great a diſtance from them; thus did *Nehemiah* for his Brethren at *Jeruſalem*, when himſelf was in a warm Neſt, and had all the enjoyments that ſo great a Princes Court could aford; 'tis not uſual for any but thoſe of great grace, to feel the Cords of the Churches Afflictions through a Bed of Doune on which themſelves lie; it muſt be a *David* that can prefer *Jeruſalem above his chief joy*. 2. On the other hand, when in the depth of our own perſonal troubles and miſeries; we can yet reſerve a large room in our prayers for any other Saints, ſpeaks a great meaſure of grace: It ſhewed the *Romans* ſtrength and courage to be great, that they could ſpare ſeveral *Legions* to ſend into *Spain* for the help of their friends there, while *Hannibal* was near their own walls with a puiſſant Army, to be able to lend Auxiliary prayers to other afflicted Saints; or abroad to the Church of God, when thou thy ſelf art engaged deeply with private ſorrows, does ſignifie a very gracious ſpirit. 3. When in our own diſtreſſes, we can entertain the tidings of any other Saints mercies with joy and thankfulneſs; this

this requires great grace indeed, to act two so contrary parts well at the same time. The prosperity of others, too oft breeds envy and discontent in them that want it; if therefore thou canst praise God for others mercies, while the tears stand in thy eyes for thy own miseries, it is a rare temper, flesh and blood never learnt thee it thou mayst be sure.

To shut up this with a Caution; though we are to pray for all Saints, yet some call for a more special remembrance at our hands. *First*, Those that are near to us by other Relations: first by bond of nature as well as of grace, *Philemon, ver.* 16. *A brother, beloved, especially to me; but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord*; 'tis true, the bond of the Spirit is more sacred, than that of the flesh; *Sanctior est copula cordis, quàm corporis*; yet when that of the flesh is twisted with the other, it adds as force to the affection, so argument to the duty; therefore saith *Paul, much more unto thee*; Charity may begin, though it must not end at home. Again, by Domestick Relation, society and communion, whether civil or religious, these give an enforcement to the duty; Master for servant, and servants for Masters; Minister for People, and People for Minister; he that starves his Family, is not like to feast his Neighbours; he that is a Churle to his Neighbours, is not like to be over-kind to strangers; so he that prayes not for those who by these Relations stand so near to him, is very unlike to abound in this duty for others. *Secondly*, Those that are in distresse; whoever you forget, remember these: If one be sick in our Family, we will send him his portion before we carve for any that are at the Table, this is a fit season for love; a friend for adversity, is as proper as fire is for a winters day: *Jobs* friends choose the right time to visit him in, but took not the right course of improving their visit; had they spent the time in prayer for him, which they did in hot disputes with him, they had profited him, and pleased God more. *Again*, This is the season that the Tempter is busie; this Lyon walks abroad in the night of affliction, hoping then to make the Christian his prey, and if he wakes, to make a prey of him, shall not we watch to pray for him? *Again*, this is the season of Gods most speedy answering prayers; *In the day that I cryed, thou hear dest me*, Psal. 138. that is, in the day of affliction; indeed now is the time when the Spirit of Christ will be stirring us up to pray; and when should we send our Letters,

but

but when the Poſt calls? He that ſtirs thee up to pray for them, will be as careful to deliver up thy prayers, and ſee an anſwer return'd. *Thirdly*, Such of the Saints as are of publick place and uſe: You pray for many here, while you pray for one. *Fourthly*, Such as have expreſly deſir'd, and engag'd you to remember them at the Throne of Grace: Among debts, ſpecialties are paid in the firſt place. Thou art a Debtor to all thy Brethren, and ow'ſt them a remembrance in thy prayers; but more eſpecially them to whom thou haſt particularly promiſed it: This is as it were, a Bond under thy hand, given for further ſecurity of paying this debt to thy friend; whoever thou forgetteſt, remember him. Did the *Butlers* conſcience accuſe him for not remembring his promiſe to *Joſeph*, who had engaged him (when he was reſtor'd to Court) to intercede with *Pharaoh* for him? *This day* (ſaith he) *I remember my faults*, Gen. 41. Much more haſt thou cauſe to confeſs thy faults, who forgetteſt to make mention of them to the Lord, that have ſolemnly deſir'd it at thy hands; to have promiſed the payment of a ſum of money, and to have failed, were not greater diſhoneſty. Thou mayſt prejudice his ſoul more by diſappointing him of thy prayer, than his Eſtate could ſuffer for want of thy money; how know'ſt thou, but the mercy he wants is ſtop't, while thy prayers come to Heaven for it? That other Saints obtain by their prayers for us, what ſometimes we do not by our own, is clear from *Job* 42. 8.

VERSE

VERSE 19, 20.

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the Mystery of the Gospel.

For which I am an Embassadour in Bonds.

CHAP. I.

Sheweth, it is a Duty to desire the prayers of others, and why; it is also shewn that to do this, doth no wrong to Christs Mediation for us; with a short Application.

THE *Apostle* having laid out this duty of prayer in its full compass, taking all Saints within its circumference; he comes now to apply this general Rule, and claims a share in it himself; *And for me*: When he bids them pray for all Saints, he surely cannot be shut out of their prayers, who is not the least in the number.

In the words: *First*, Here is an Exhortation, or *Pauls* request for himself, and in him for all Ministers of the Gospel; *And for me.* 1.

Secondly, The Matter of his Request; *That utterance may be given unto me*; not that he would confine and determine them in their prayers to this Request alone; but propounds it as a principal head to be insisted on by them on his behalf. 2.

3. *Thirdly*, The end why he desires this; *That I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the Mystery of the Gospel.*

4. *Fourthly*, A double Argument to back and enforce this his Request. *First*, Taken from his Office; *for which I am an Embassadour.* *Secondly*, From his present afflicted state, *an Embassadour in Bonds.*

1. *First*, Of the first, his Request; *And for me.*

First, We may note here, That People are to be taught the duty they owe to their Minister, as well as to others; though indeed no duty is harder for the Minister to press, or for the People to hear, for him to preach with humility and wisdom, or for them to receive without prejudice.

SECT. I.

2. *Secondly*, IT is not only our duty to pray for others, but also to desire the prayers of others for our selves; if a *Paul* turns Beggar, and desires the remembrance of others for him, who then needs it not? This hath been the constant practice of the Saints; sometimes they call in the help of their Brethren upon special occasions to pray with them: Thus *Daniel, chap.* 2. 18. when required to interpret the *Kings Dream*, makes use of *Hananiah, Mishael*, and *Azariah his Companions*; *then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to these, that they would desire mercies of the God of Heaven concerning this secret. Daniel* would not give an answer to the King, till he had got an answer from God; to prayer therefore he goes, no doubt he forgot not this Errand in his Closet, when at his solitary Devotions; but withall, he calls in help to joyn in social prayer with him; he sends for them to his house, where it is probable they pray'd together for the mutual quickning of their affections, and strengthning of their Petition, by this their united force; wherefore, *ver.* 23. he acknowledgeth the mercy as an answer to their concurrent prayers: *I thank thee O thou God of my fathers, who hast made known unto me now, what we desired of thee:* This justifies the Saints practice, when in any great strait of Tentation or Affliction, they get some other of the faithful to give a lift with them at this duty; sometimes

times we have them desiring their Brethrens prayers for them, when they cannot conveniently have it with them: Thus *Esther* sets the *Jewes* in *Shushan* to prayer for her, *Esther* 4. 16. so our *Apostle* in many of his *Epistles*, desires the Saints to carry his name with them to the Throne of Grace, *Rom.* 15. 30. 2 *Cor.* 1. 10, 11. *Col.* 4. 3. *Phil.* 22. 8. And not without great Reason; for,

First, God hath made it a debt, which one Saint ows to another; now not to desire this debt to be paid, which God hath charged our Brethren with, is to undervalue the mercy and goodness of our God: Should a Legacy be left us by a friend, were it not a despising of his kindness, not to call upon the Heir who is to pay it? Surely God accounts he doth us a kindness herein, and therefore may take it ill, not to ask for it; it is not our usage to lose a debt for want of a demand, and this is none of the least we have owing us. 1.

Secondly, Many are the gracious promises that are made to such prayers of the faithful, one for another: *John* 1. 5, 16. *If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them:* But you will say, How can the prayer of one obtain forgiveness for another? I answer, None is forgiven for the faith of another, this must be personal; but the believing fervent prayer of one, is an excellent means to obtain the Grace of Repentance and Faith for another, whereby he may come to be forgiven; so *James* 5. 16. *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed:* Now in not desiring our Brethrens help in this kind, we make no use of these promises (the proper end of which, is, to encourage us to call in the Auxiliary Aid of others) as if such passages of Scripture might have been well spared for any need we have of them; should you see a piece of ground never sown nor fed, you might well say, the ground is barren, or the Owner a bad husband; either the promise is empty and useless, or we that don't improve it, are worse husbands for our souls; but we cannot say so of the promise, if we consider the great fruit and advantage which the Saints in all Ages have reap'd from it. Did not *Daniel* get the knowledge of a great secret, as a return of his Companions prayers with him? Did not *Jobs* friends escape a great judgment that hung over their heads at his intercession? What a miraculous deliverance had 2.

Peter, at the prayers of a few Saints gather'd together on his behalf? Bring not therefore an evil report upon this promise, seeing such sweet clusters as these are to be shewn that have been gathered from it.

SECT. 2.

3. *Thirdly*, ELSE we are guilty of quenching the Spirit of prayer, which may be done in our selves, and others also.

First, By this we may quench it in our selves, partly, because we neglect a Duty; we are bid *to confess our sins to one another*; and for what end, but to have the benefit of mutual prayers? The same Spirit which stirs thee up to pray for thy self, will excite thee in many cases to set others at prayer for thee; which if thou dost not, thou overlay'st his motions, and so committest a sin.

Again, Thou quenchest the Spirit of prayer in thy self, by depriving thy self of that assistance which thou mightest receive in thy own prayers through theirs; for the Spirit conveyes his quickning Grace to us in the use of instruments and means; he that doth not hear the Word preach't, quenches his Spirit, because God useth this as Bellows to blow up and enkindle the Saints Grace; so he that desires not the prayers of others, quencheth the Spirit of prayer in himself, because the exercise of their Grace in prayer for thee, may fetch down more Grace to be pour'd in unto thee.

Secondly, Thou mayst be accessary to the quenching of the Spirit in others, because thou hindrest the acting of those Graces in them, which would have been drawn forth in prayer for thee, hadst thou acquainted them with thy condition; fire is quench'd by substracting Fuel, as well as by throwing on water; by opening thy wants or desires to thy Brethren, thou feed'st the Spirit of prayer in them, as they have new matter administred to work upon; by acquainting them with the merciful Providences of God to thee, thou prick'st a song of praise for them; how many groans and sighs should God in prayer have had from thy Neighbour-Saints, hadst thou not bit in thy temptations and afflictions from their knowledge? what peals of joy and thankfulnes would they have rung, hadst thou not conceal'd thy mercies from them?

Fourthly,

Fourthly, To expreſs the humble ſenſe we have of our own weakneſs, and the need we have of others help; humble ſouls are fearful of their own ſtrength; they that have little, deſire Partners with them in their Trade; but when they conceit their own private ſtock to be ſufficient, then they can Trade by themſelves: *Now ye are full, ye are rich, and have reigned as Kings without us*, ſaith *Paul* of the ſelf-conceited *Corinthians*; the time was, you thought you had need of *Pauls* preaching to you, and praying for you, but now ye Reign without us: O how many are there, when time was, could beg prayers of every Chriſtian they met, nothing but wants and complaints could be heard from them, which made them beg help of all they knew, to pray their corruptions down, and their graces up? But now they have left the Beggers Trade, and Reign in an imaginary Kingdom of their ſelf-conceited ſufficiency; certainly as it ſhews want of charity not to pray for others, ſo no want of pride not to deſire prayers from others. 4.

Fifthly, That we may prevent Satans deſigns againſt us; he knows very well what an advantage he hath upon the Chriſtian, when ſever'd from his company; wherefore he labours what he can to hinder the conjunction of his ſolitary prayers, with the Auxiliary Aid his Brethren might lend him. *Sampſons* ſtrength lay not in a ſingle hair, but his whole lock; the Saints ſafety lies in communion, not in ſolitude and ſingle devotion; how many alas concealing their temptations from others, have found their ſorrows grow upon them after all their own private endeavours, and wraſtlings in ſecret againſt them? like one, who when his houſe is on fire, tries to quench it himſelf, but is not able, and ſo hazards the loſs of all he hath for want of timely calling his Neighbours to his help. 5.

Sixthly and laſtly, The love we owe to our Brethren requires it, the Saints here live where none elſe love them but themſelves, therefore they had need make much of one another: Now this of deſiring their prayers, carries a three-fold expreſſion of love to them. 6.

1. By this we acknowledge the Grace of God in our Brethren, or elſe it is ſuppoſed we would not employ them in ſuch a work: He that deſires a Friend to preſent a Petition to the King on his behalf, ſhews, he believes him to be in favour, and one that hath

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some interest in the Prince. Now what more honourable testimony can we give to another, than to own him as a Child of God, one, whose prayers are welcome to Heaven? We are bid *to prefer every one his brother in honour*. Now no one way can we do this more, than by making use of their help at the Throne of Grace to be our Remembrancers to the Lord.

2. By this we do our utmost to interest our Brethren in the mercy we desire them to pray for: Were a Merchant to send some Commodity to *Turkey* or *Spain*, which he knows will make a gainful return, it would be a great favour to take others into partnership with him in the Adventure; and what Voyage is gainful like this of prayer? and whoever shares in the Duty, is partner in the Mercy.

3. By this we confirm them in a confidence of our readiness to pray for them; what consists good Neighbourhood in, but a readiness to reciprocate kindnesses one to another? when that is at the service of one Neighbour, which is in the house of another: Now who will be bold or free with his Neighbour to take a kindness from him, that is not willing to receive the like? Be ye strange to your Friend, and you teach him to be so to your self; nothing endears Christians more in love, than an open heart one to another; a Friend should have no Cabinet in his bosom, to which he allows not his Friend a Key.

Sect. 3.

Object. *Object.* BUT *do we not by desiring our Fellow-Saints prayers, intrench upon Christs Mediatory Office?*

Answ. *Answ.* No, surely Christ would not command that, which would be a wrong to himself; there is great difference betwixt our desiring Christ to pray for us, and our Fellow-brethren; we desire Christ to present our persons and prayers, expecting acceptation of both through his blood and intercession; but no such matter from the prayers of our Brethren, we only desire them as Friends to bear us company to the Throne of Grace, there to present our prayers in a communion together, expecting the welcome of both their, and our prayers, not from them, but from Christ; relying on Christ to procure the welcome both to our prayers and theirs, at our heavenly Fathers hand.

Object.

Object. 2. *But why then may we not desire the prayers of the deceased Saints, for the same purpose that we desire the prayers of those that live yet with us?* Object. 2.

Answ. *First*, We have no precept or example for this in the Word; and unbidden there in duties of worship, is forbidden; we must not *be Wise above what is written*: Not to use the means which God hath appointed, is a great sin, which was *Ahaz* his case; but to invent wayes or means more than God hath appointed, is far worse. It is bad enough for a Subject not to keep the Kings Laws; but far worse for him to presume to mint a Law of his own head; the first is undutiful, but the latter is a Traytour. *Answ.* 1.

Secondly, We have no way of expressing our thoughts and desires to the Saints departed, why should we pray to them that cannot hear what we say? or where is the Messenger to send our minds by? or which the word in Scripture that saith, they hear in Heaven, what we pray on Earth? 2.

Thirdly, 'Tis the Prerogative of Christ to be the only Agent in Heaven for his Saints on Earth; to which of the Angels or Saints did God say, sit thou at my right hand? In the outward Temple, we find the whole Congregation praying, but into the Holy of Holiest, enter'd none but the High Priest with his perfume; every Saint is a Priest to offer up prayers for himself and others on Earth; but Christ only as our High Priest intercedes in Heaven for us. The glorious Angels and Saints there no doubt wish well to the Church below; but it is Christs Office to receive the incense of his Militant Saints prayers, which they send up from this outward Temple here below to Heaven, and to offer it with all their desires to God; so that to employ any in Heaven besides Christ to pray for us, is to put Christ out of Office. 3.

Sect. 4.

First, IT reproves those into whose hearts it never yet came, to beg prayers for their own souls; surely they are great strangers to themselves, and ignorant what a priviledge they lose; as *Christ* said to the *woman* of *Samaria*, if thou hadst known the gift of God, and who it is that asks, thou wouldst have ask't, and he would have given. Did poor souls know who the Saints are, *Use.*

are, what Favourites with God, and how prevalent their prayers are with him, they would not willingly be left out of their remembrance? I never knew any, but as soon as God began to work upon them (though it were no more than to awaken their consciences) but they thought this worth the desiring; it's natural for men in straits to crave help. A servant or a child, when Master or Father are displeased, and blows are threatn'd, if they know any that have interest in their favour, and are more likely to prevail with them than others, then they entreat to become Suitors for them. When hunger and want pinch the poor, then if they have any Neighbour to be their friend, to speak to the Parish for them, he shall soon hear of them; now were the sense of their wants, or troubles of a higher nature, would they not be as earnest to desire prayers for their souls, as now they are to beg bread for their bodies? Well, you that fear God, and live among such, do your Duty, though they have not hearts to desire it at your hands; pray over their stupid souls before the Lord. When a Friend is sick, and his senses are gone, you do not stay to send for the Physitian till he comes to himself, and is able to desire you to do it for him. You had need make the more haste to God for such as these, least they go away in this Apoplexy of conscience, and so be past praying for.

2. *Secondly*, Those who desire prayers of Gods people, but hypocritically, and they are such as set others on work, but pray not for themselves, a certain sign of a naughty heart: Thus *Pharaoh* often call'd for *Moses* to pray for him and his Land, but we read not that ever he made any Address himself to God, but thought it enough to send another of his Errand; whereas a gracious soul will be sure to meet him he employs at the work: *I beseech you* (saith *Paul*) *to strive together with me* in your prayers to God for me; he did not slip the collar off his own neck, to put it on anothers, but drew together with them in it; else they that pray for thee, may pray the mercy away from thee.

3. *Thirdly*, Such that desire prayers of others, but it is only in some great pinch; if their Chariot be set fast in some deep slough of Affliction, then they send in all haste for some to draw them out with their prayer; who at another time change their thoughts of the Saints, their prayers, yea, and of God himself: The Frogs once gone, and *Moses* hears no more of *Pharaoh* till another plague

plague rubs up his memory. *Moſes* he hears not *Pharaoh* cry, till *Pharaoh* hears the Frogs croak: Thus, as they ſay of *Corall*, 'tis ſoft in the water where it grows, and hard when taken out: Many their conſciences are ſoft and tender whilſt ſleeping in Affliction, but hard and ſtout when that is removed. *Pharaoh*, that ſo oft call'd *Moſes* up to prayer, at laſt could not endure the ſight of him; but fore-warn'd him for ever coming in his ſight: O take heed of this; when once the wretch came to that paſs, and ſo ſtrangely chang'd his Note, as to drive *Moſes* from him, that had ſo often Bail'd and reſcu'd him out of the hands of Divine Vengeance, then he had not long to live; for he remov'd the very Dam, and lift up the Sluce to let in ruine upon himſelf. 2.

Fourthly, Such as deſire others to pray for them, but vain-gloriouſly, to gain a reputation for religious: Beware of this, yet charge not all for the hypocriſie of ſome; neither deprive thy ſelf of the benefit of others prayers, out of an imaginary fear leaſt thou ſhouldſt play the hypocrite therein; watch thy heart, but wave not the Duty; becauſe ſome have ſtrangled themſelves with their own Garters, wilt thou therefore be afraid to wear thine? or becauſe ſome Canting Beggers goe about the Countrey to ſhew their Soares, which they deſire not to have cured; wilt not thou therefore when wounded go to the Chirurgion. 3.

CHAP. II.

The Peoples Duty of praying for the Miniſters of the Goſpel, with ſeveral Reaſons of it.

3. FROM this Requeſt of the *Apoſtle*, we may note that the Miniſters of the Goſpel are in an eſpecial manner to be remembred in the Saints prayers; and that,

SECT. I.

1. *Firſt*, IN regard of God, whoſe Meſſage they bring; they come about his work, and deliver his Errand; not to pray for them, will be interpreted, you wiſh not well to the buſineſs they have in hand for him; they do not only come from God, but with Chriſt: *We as workers together with him, beſeech you not to receive the Grace of God in vain*, 2 Cor. 6. 9. Chriſt and the Miniſter go into the Pulpit together, a greater than man is there; Maſter and ſervant are both at work.

Again, The bleſſing of the Miniſters labour, is from God; not the hand that ſets the plant, or ſows the ſeed; but Gods bleſſing gives the encreaſe, 1 *Cor.* 3. 6. When *Melancton* was firſt converted, the light of the Goſpel ſhone with ſo clear and ſtrong a beam on his own eyes, that he thought he ſhould convert all he preach'd unto; he deem'd 'twas impoſſible his hearers ſhould withſtand that truth, which he ſaw with ſo much evidence; but he afterwards found the contrary, which made him ſay, *I ſee now that the old Adam is too hard for the young Melancton.* God carries the Key by his Girdle, that alone can open hearts, and prayer is the Key to open his; when Chriſt intended to ſend forth his Diſciples to preach the Goſpel, he ſets them ſolemnly to prayer, *Mat.* 9. *ult.* Many are the promiſes which he hath given to the Miniſters of the Goſpel for their protection, that he will keep theſe Stars in his right

right hand, or else they had been on the ground, and stamp't under foot long ere this; for their assistance and success in the work; *I will be thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say*, Exod. 4. 12. *Go preach, I am with you to the end of the World*, Mat. 28. wherefore are these promises, but to be shot back again in prayers to God that gave them?

Sect. 2.

Secondly, IN regard of the Ministers themselves; there is not a greater object of pity and prayer in the whole World, than the faithful Ministers of Christ; if you consider, 2.

First, The importance of their work; 'tis Temple-work, and that is weighty; which made *Paul*, that had the broadest shoulders of all his Brethren, cry out, *Who is sufficient for these things? I am doing a great work* (said *Nehemiah*) *chap. 6. ver. 3.* But what was that to his? no work more hazardous to miscarry in, than this; 'tis sad enough to drop to Hell from under the Pulpit (to hear the Gospel, and yet to perish) but O how dismal to fall out of it thither for unfaithfulness in the work? The consideration of this, made *Paul* so bestir him; *Knowing the terrour of the Lord, we perswade men.*

Secondly, It is a laborious work; *Know them which labour among you, and admonish you*, 1 Thes. 5. 12. *Those who labour in the Word and Doctrine*, οἱ κοπιῶντες, which labour to weariness; he that preaches as he should, shall find it a work, not a play; not a work of an hour while speaking in the Pulpit, but a load that lies heavy on his shoulders all the week long; a labour that spends the vitals, and consumes the oyle which should feed the Lamp of nature; such a labour (in a word) as makes old age and youth oft meet together. The *Jewes* took Christ to be about fifty years old, when he was little above thirty, *John* 8. 57. I find some give this reason of it, because Christ had so macerated his body with labour in preaching, fasting and watching, that it aged his very countenance, and made him look older than he was: Other Callings are (many of them) but as exercise to nature, they blow off the ashes from its coal, and help to discharge nature of those superfluities which oppress it, who eats his bread more heartily,

tily; and sleeps more sweetly than the Plow-man? But the Ministers work debilitates nature, 'tis hard for him to eat and work too; like the Candle, he wasts while he shines; whatever work is thought harder than other, we have it borrow'd to set forth the Ministers labour; they are call'd Souldiers, Watch-men, Husbandmen, yea, their work is set out by the pangs of a woman in Travel; some of them indeed have easier labours than other (those who find more success of their Ministry than their Brethren) but who can tell the throws that their souls feel, who all the time of their Ministry go in Travel, and bring forth dead Children at last?

Thirdly, 'Tis an opposed work by Hell and Earth.

First by Hell; the Devil never lik'd Temple-work; he that was at *Joshuahs* right hand to resist him, is at the Ministers elbow to disturb him, and that both in study and Pulpit also: *I would have come* (saith *Paul*) but Satan hindred; who can tell all the devices that Satan hath to take the Minister off, or hinder him in his work? One while he discourageth him, that he is ready with *Jonah*, to run away from his Charge; another while he is blowing of him up with pride; even *Paul* himself hath a Thorn given him in his flesh, to keep pride out of his heart; sometimes he royls him with passion, and leavens his zeal into sowreness and unmercifulness; this the Disciples were tainted with, when they call'd for fire to come down from Heaven upon those that stood in their way. Sometimes he chills their zeal, and intimidates their spirits into cowardize and self-pity: Thus *Peter* favour'd himself when he denied his Master; and when at another time, he dissembled with the *Jewes*, to curry their favour.

Secondly, It is opposed by the wicked World: *To be a Minister* (said *Luther*) *is nothing else but to derive the Worlds wrath and fury upon himself*: How are they loaden with reproaches? This Dirt lies so thick no where, as on the Ministers Coat; what odious names did the best of men, the *Apostles* themselves go under? And it were well they would only smite them with the tongue, but you shall find in all Ages, Persecutors have thirsted most after their blood; the persecution in the *Acts*, begins with the cutting off of *James* his head; seven thousand could lie better hid in *Jezabels* time, than one Prophet; these are the burdensome stones, which every one is lifting at, though none can do it without

without bruising their own fingers; in every National storm almost, these are taken up to be thrown over-board for those that rais'd it: How many are there of an opinion, that nothing keeps them from seeing happy dayes, but the standing of them and their Office? O miserable happiness, which cannot be bought and purchased, but with the ruine of those that bring the tydings of peace and salvation to them all! Such a happiness this would be, as the Sheep had in the Fable, when perswaded to have the Dogs that kept the Wolves off kill'd; or as the Passengers at Sea would have, when their *Pilot* is thrown over-board. In a word, such a happiness as the *Jewes* had, when Christ was taken out of the way by their murderous hands; they slew him, to preserve themselves from the *Romans* destroying their City, but brought them with irreparable ruine by this very means upon their own head.

Fourthly, That which adds weight to all the former, is, that the men who are to bear this heavy burden, and to conflict with all these difficulties and dangers, are those, who have no stronger shoulders than others, for they are men subject to the like infirmities with their Brethren. Now will not all this melt you into compassion towards them, and your compassion send you to prayer for them? Shall they stand in the face of death and danger, where Satans Bullets, and mans also, flie so thick, and you not be at the pains to raise a breast-work before them for their defence by your prayers?

Sect. 3.

Thirdly, IN regard of your selves; love to your selves will plead to pray for them. 3.

1. Consider the Ministry is an Office set up on purpose for your sakes; it was never intended for the exalting of a few men above their Brethren, but for the service of your faith; the gifts that Christ hath given to men, *Ephes.* 4. (that is, their Office and Abilities to discharge it) they are both for the edifying of the body of Christ, and will you not pray for those, that from one end of the year to the other, are at work for you? If you had but a child or servant sent abroad about your worldly business, would you not send a prayer after him? Thus did good *Jacob*, when his children 1.

dren went on his Errand to *Egypt, God Almighty give you mercy before the man.* Will not you do thus much for your poor Minister, and pray, God Almighty go with him, when in his Study to prepare, and when in the Pulpit to deliver, what he hath prepared for our souls.

2. *Secondly*, The Ministers miscarriage is dangerous to the people; therefore pray for them, least you be led into temptation by their falls. The sins of Teachers, are the Teachers of sin; if the Nurse be sick, the Child is in danger to suck the disease from her that lies at her breast; if the Minister be tainted with an Errour, it is strange if many of his people should not catch the infection; when, if he be loose and scandalous in his life, he is like a common Well or Fountain, corrupted and muddied, at which all the Town draw their water. The Devil aim'd at more than *Peter*, when he desired leave to try a fall with him: *Luk.* 22.31. *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to winnow thee.* He knew his fall was like to strike up the heels of many others; the Ministers practice makes a greater sound than his Doctrine; they who forget his Sermon, will remember his example to quote it for their Apology and Defence when time serves. *Peter withdraws, and other Jews dissembled with him, Gal.* 2.12,13. Truly friends, your Ministers are but men, and of no stronger make than your selves, men subject to the like passions: He among them that presumes, he shall not slide into an Errour, or fall into a sin, is bolder than any promise in the Word gives him leave; they need your prayers as much as any, and those most, that fear their danger least.

3. *Thirdly*, By praying for the Minister, you take the most hopeful way to profit by his Ministry; such a soul as this, may come in expectation to have a portion laid on his Trencher, his Meal is spoke for; and such Guests as send to Heaven before they come to an Ordinance, are most likely to have the best entertainment. He that hears a Sermon, and hath not pray'd for the Minister, and the success of his labours, sets down to his meat, before he hath crav'd a blessing; he playes the Thief to his own soul, while he robs the Minister of the Assistance, his prayers might have brought him in from Heaven. Pinch the Nurse, and you starve the Child; the less the Minister is pray'd for, the less it is to be fear'd will the people profit by him.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, By praying for the Minister, you do not only render the Word he preacheth more effectual to your selves, but you also interest your selves in the good his Ministry does to others: As there is a way of partaking in others sins, so in others holy Services. He that strengthens the hands of a sinner any way in his wicked practices, makes his sin his own, and shall partake with him in the wages due to the work when the day of reckoning comes. So he that strengthens the Ministers hand in his holy work, whether by prayer, countenance, or relief of his necessities, becomes a partaker with him in his service, and shall not be left out in the reward: *Matth.* 10. 40. We read there of *a Prophets reward* given to private Christians; they who communicate with the Minister in his labour, by any subserviency to it, shall share in the reward; when God comes to reward his Prophets for their faithful service; then *Obadiah* that hid them from the fury of their Persecutors; then *Onisephorus* that refresh'd their bowels; yea, than all those faithful ones that put up their fervent prayers for the free course of the Gospel in their Ministry, shall be call'd in to share with them in the reward. He that hath but a fifteenth part in a Ship, is an owner, as well as he that hath more; and when the Voyage is over, he hath his share of the return that is made proportionable to his part. O what an encouragement is this to have a stock going in this bottom? yea, to venture deeper than ever at the Throne of Grace for the now despised Ministers of Christ, seeing Heavens promise is our ensuring Office to secure all we send to Sea upon this Account. 4.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Wherein is shewn, what the faithful Ministers of the Gospel chiefly desire Prayers for; a threefold importance of the Apostles Request, when he desires utterance may be given him; with some short Notes therefrom.

2. THE second Branch in the general Division of the words, follows; and contains the matter of the *Apostles* request to the Church of *Ephesus*; or what he desires them to mention to God in his behalf, *That utterance may be given to me.*

SECT. I.

WHere observe *first* the spirituality of his desire, he sets them not a praying for carnal things, the worlds honour, or riches; no, we hear him not so much as mention his necessities and outward wants, which he being now a prisoner, 'tis like he was no great stranger to; but they are spiritual wants he most groans under, he desires the charity of their prayers, more than of their purse.

Secondly, Observe the publick concernment of that he begs prayers for, *That utterance may be given me*; this is not a personal priviledge, that would redound only to his own private advantage, but which renders him useful to others, that which may fit him for his publick employment in the Church, from which we may gather this Note.

A faithful Miniſters heart runs more on his work, than on himſelf; that which he chiefly deſires, is, how he may beſt diſcharge his Miniſterial Truſt. No doubt *Paul* ſpake out of the abundance of his heart that comes out firſt, of which his heart was moſt full, and for which his thoughts were moſt ſollicitous; as if he had ſaid, if you will take me into your prayers, let this be your Requeſt, *That utterance may be given me*; wherever almoſt you find him begging prayers, he forgets not this, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 1. *Pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free courſe.* Col. 4. 3. *Praying for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to ſpeak the myſtery of Chriſt.* Admirable are the expreſſions whereby this holy man declares how deeply his heart was engag'd in the work of the Lord, *Rom.* 1. 9. He tells them that his very ſoul and ſpirit was ſet upon it; *whom I ſerve with my Spirit in the Goſpel of his Son*; never did any more long for preferment in the Church, than he to preach the Goſpel to the Church: *Ver.* 11. *I long to ſee you, that I may impart unto you ſome ſpiritual gift*: He profeſſeth himſelf a Debtor to all ſorts of men, he hath a heart and tongue to preach to all that have an ear to hear. *I am a Debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; to the wiſe, and to the unwiſe, ver.* 14. Yea, he was ready to preach the Goſpel at *Rome* it ſelf, *ver.* 15. where he ſhould ſtand in the mouth of death and danger; this ſo took up his thoughts, that for it, he threw all his worldly concernments at his heels; as for the Worlds Riches, he profeſſeth he progg'd not for it; *I ſeek not yours, but you*, 2 Cor. 12. 14. He had a nobler Merchandize in his eye, he had rather preach them into Chriſt, than their money into his purſe; and for their reſpect and love, though it was due debt to him, yet he lays it aſide, and on he will go with his work, though they give him no thanks for his pains. *I will very gladly ſpend, and be ſpent; though the more abundantly I love you, the leſs I be loved.* His duty he will do to them, and leaves them to look to theirs to him: The Nurſe draws forth her breaſt to the Child, though froward, becauſe ſhe looks for her reward not from the Child, but its Parent; God will reward the faithful Miniſter, though his people will not thank him for his labour. *In a word*, his very life was not valued by him, when it ſtood in competition with his work: *Acts* 20. 24. *But none of theſe move me, neither count I my life dear, that I might finiſh my courſe with joy, and the Miniſtry that I have received from*

Note.

the Lord Jesus: And not without great Reason is it, that Ministers should prefer their Duty above all temporal respects; they are servants to God, and a servant must look to his work, whatever becomes of himself. *Abrahams* servant would not eat till he had done his Message; and when it sped, neither would he stay then to lose time, but posts back again with all expedition to his Master, *Gen.* 24. 33. He said well, who was employed to relieve the City of *Rome* with Corn; when the Master of the Ship would have had him stay for fair weather, answered, tis necessary that we sail, not that we live: 'Tis necessary the Minister should fulfill his Ministry, not that he should be rich, not that he should be in reputation; the incomparable value of souls is such, as should make us hazard our whole temporal stake to promote their eternal salvation; he that wins souls is wise, though he lose his own life in the work.

Sect. 2.

But we come to a more particular enquiry into these words, what the *Apostle* means by *utterance*, which he desires may be given him. A parallel place to this we have, *Col.* 4. 3,4. Three things we may conceive the Apostle drives at in this his Request.

1. *First*, By utterance may be meant, liberty to preach the Gospel; that his mouth might not be stop't by the Persecutor, who had him already his Prisoner; now he desires they would pray for him, that he might not be quite taken off his work.

Note 1. Where *first* observe, What a grievous affliction it is to a faithful Minister to be denied liberty to preach the Gospel, so long as *Paul* might preach, though in a Chain; he is not much troubled, the Word is free, though he be bound; but to have his mouth stop't, to see poor souls ready to perish for want of that bread which he hath to give out, and yet may not be allowed this liberty, goes to his heart. *O pray*, saith he, *that utterance may be given*; If he may not preach, neither would he live; for upon this account alone he desired life, the furtherance of their faith, 1 *Phil.* 25. O how far are they from *Pauls* mind? to whom 'tis more tedious to preach, than grievous to be kept from the work; how

seldom

ſeldom ſhould we ſee ſome in the Pulpit, were it not a neceſſary expedient to bring in their Revenue at the years end?

Sect. 3.

Secondly, THE liberty of the Goſpel, and of the Miniſters to deliver it, are in an eſpecial manner to be prayed for. *Note 2.*

Firſt, Becauſe this is ſtrongly oppoſed and maligned by Satan and his Inſtruments; wherever God opens a door for his Goſpel, there Satan raiſeth his Batteries: 1 *Cor.* 16.9. *A great door and effectual is open'd unto me, and there are many Adverſaries*; no ſooner doth God open his ſhop-windows, but the Devil he is at work to ſhut them again, or hinder the Free-trade of his Goſpel: Other mens ſervants can work peaceably in their Maſters ſhop, but as for Gods ſervants, every one hath a ſtone to throw in at them, as they paſs by; when *Paul* began to preach at *Theſſalonica*, the City was preſently in an uproar and cry, *Theſe that have turned the World upſide down, are come hither alſo*, Acts 17.6. Indeed they ſaid true, let the Goſpel have but liberty, and it will turn the world upſide down, it will make a change, but a happy one; this the Devil knows, and therefore dreads its approach.

Secondly, Becauſe 'tis the choiceſt mercy that God can bleſs a Nation with; happy are the people that are in ſuch a caſe; 'tis the Goſpel of the Kingdom; it lifts a people up to Heaven; we could better ſpare the Sun out of its Orb, than the preaching of the Goſpel out of the Church. Souls might find the way to Heaven, though the Sun did not lend them its light; but without the light of truth, they cannot take one right ſtep towards it: *Work* (ſaith *Chriſt*) *while ye have the light*, John 12. 36. Salvation-work cannot be done by the Candle-light of a natural underſtanding, but by the Day-light of Goſpel-Revelation; this Sun muſt riſe, before man can go forth to this labour.

Thirdly, 'Tis in Gods power to preſerve the liberty of his Goſpel and Meſſengers, in ſpight of the Devil and his Inſtruments; therefore indeed *Paul* ſends them not to Court to beg his liberty, but to Heaven: God had *Nero* cloſer priſoner than he had *Paul*: *Rev.* 3.8. *Behold I have ſet before thee an open door, and no man*

can shut it. At *Ephesus* were many Adversaries we heard, yet the door was kept open; Christ carries the Keyes of the Church-door at his Girdle: *Rev.* 3.7. *He that hath the Key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth*; the Key of the house of *David*, so *Isa.* 22.22. The Church is Christs house, and the Master sure will keep the Key of his own door.

Fourthly, Prayer hath a mighty power with God to preserve or restore liberty to his Gospel and Messengers; it hath fetch't home his servants from Banishment, it hath brought them out of their Dungeon; the Prison could not hold *Peter*, when the Church was at prayer for him. It hath had a mighty influence into the Churches Affairs when at the lowest ebbe; it was a sad World to the Church in *Nero*'s time, when *Paul* set the Saints a praying for Kings, and those that were in Authority; which prayers, though they were not answered in *Nero*, yet I doubt not but afterwards they were in *Constantine*, and other *Christian Princes*, under whose Royal Wing the Church of Christ was cherished and protected.

Fifthly and lastly, Pray for their liberty, because when the Gospel goes away, it goes not alone, but carries away your other mercies along with it: The Hangings are taken down when the Prince removes his Court; where the Minister hath not liberty to preach the Truth, the people will not long have liberty to profess it. When it went ill with *James* the *Apostle*, it went not well with the Church at *Jerusalem*, *Acts* 12. 1, 2. Nor, can that place look long to enjoy its outward peace; when God removes his Gospel, it is to make way for worse company to come, even all his sore plagues and judgments, *Jer.* 6. 8.

Sect. 4.

2. *Secondly*, When the *Apostle* desires utterance to be given him, he may mean, that he may have a word given him to preach; ἵνα μοὶ δοθῇ λογὸς, according to that which Christ promiseth, *Mat.* 10. 19. *It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.* From which we may Note:

1. *First*, That Ministers have no ability of their own for their work.

work. O how long may they sit tumbling their Books over, and beating their brains, till God comes to their help! and then (as *Jacobs* Venison) 'tis brought to their hand; if God drop not down his assistance, we write with a pen that hath no ink; if any in the World need walk pendantly upon God more than others, the Minister is he.

Secondly, Observe, that those who are most eminent for gifts and grace, have meanest thoughts of themselves, and are acquainted most with their own insufficiency. *Paul* himself is not ashamed to let Christians know, that if God brings it not into him, he cannot deal out to them; he cannot speak a word to them, till he receives it from God, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. Not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God, who hath also made us able Ministers of the New Testament; he is the able Minister whom God enables. 2.

Thirdly, Observe, the meanest Christian may by his faithful prayers help to make the Ministers Sermon for him: *Pray*, saith the *Apostle*, *that utterance may be given me*; that I may have from God what I should deliver to others: O what an useful Instrument is a praying Christian! he may not only help his own Minister, but others, even all the World over. *Paul* was now at *Rome*, and sends for prayers as far as to the Saints at *Ephesus*. 3.

Sect. 5.

Thirdly, BY utterance, he may mean a faculty of speech, a readiness and facility to deliver to others what he hath been enabled to conceive in his own mind of the will of God; many eminent servants of God have been very sensible of, and much discourag'd for their impedite speech, and hesitant delivery. Now this may proceed from a natural cause, or supernatural. 3.

First, From a natural cause; as, 1. From a defect in the Instruments of speech, which some think was the cause of *Moses* his complaint, *Exod.* 4. 10. *I am not eloquent, but slow of speech*: And this discourag'd him from being sent on Gods Errand; but God can compensate the hesitancy of the tongue with the Divine power of the matter delivered; this *Moses*, who was so *slow in speech*,

speech, yet *was mighty in words*, Acts 7.22. able to make *Pharaohs* stout heart to tremble, though he might stammer in the delivery of it; God promised indeed to be with his mouth, yet 'tis probable he did not cure his natural infirmity; for we find him complaining afterwards of it: Such natural imperfections therefore, should neither discourage the Minister, nor prejudice the people; but rather make him more careful, that the matter be weighty he delivers; and them, that their attention be more close and united. 2. From a weak memory; he that reads in a bad print, where many letters are defac'd, cannot read fast and smooth, but will oft be stop't to study what is next. Memory is an inward Table or Book, out of which the Minister reads his Sermon unseen; if the notions or meditations we have to deliver, be not fairly imprinted on our memory, no wonder that the tongue is oft at a stand, except we should speak to no purpose; if the Hopper be stop't, the Mill cannot grind; or if the Pipe that feeds the Cistern be obstructed, it will be seen at the Cock; when God hath assisted in the study, we need him to strengthen our memory in the Pulpit. 3. From fear; if the heart faint, 'tis no wonder the tongue faulters; this 'tis like was at the bottom of *Jeremiah*'s excuse: *Chap.* 1.6. *Ah Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child*: That is, I want the courage and spirit of a man to wrastle with those oppositions that will certainly meet me in the work; that this was his infirmity, appears by the method God takes for the cure: *Ver.* 7,8. *Say not I am a Child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee*; *Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee.*

Secondly, Supernatural, where none of these defects are, but the Minister stands best furnish't, and in greatest readiness for his work; yet let but God turn the Cock, and there is a stop put to the whole work; not only *the preparation of the heart, but the answer of the tongue, both are of the Lord*, Prov. 16. 1. God keeps the Key of the mouth as well as of the heart; not a word can get out, but sticks in the teeth, while God opens the doors of the lips to give it a free egress. He *open'd* the mouth of the *Ass*, and stop't the mouth of that wicked *Prophet* its Master. *Num.* 22. hear him confessing as much to *Balak*, ver. 38.. *Lo I am come unto thee*; *Have I now any power at all to say any thing? The Word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.* Never man desired

desired more to be speaking than he; that which should have got him his hire, the wages of unrighteousness, for he lov'd it dearly: But God had tongue-ty'd him; nay, even holy men, when they would speak the Truth, and that for God, cannot deliver themselves of what they have conceived in their inward meditations; hence *Davids* prayer, *Open my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.* *God* tells *Ezekiel*, he would *make his tongue cleave to his mouth*; he should not reprove them, though he would, *chap.* 3. 26.

Sect. 6.

First, DO Ministers depend thus on God for utterance? This speaks to you my Brethren in the Lords work, do nothing for which God may may stop your mouths when you come into the Pulpit. *Use* 1.

First, Take heed of any sin smothering in your bosomes; canst thou believe God will assist thee in his work, who canst lend thy hand to the Devils? may'st thou not rather fear he should hang a padlock on thy lips, and strike thee dumb, when thou goest about thy work? you remember the story of *Oregin*, how after his great fall he was silenc'd in the very Pulpit; for at the reading of that, *Psal.* 50. 16. *What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes? or that thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy mouth?* The conscience of his sin would not suffer him to speak. O 'tis sad, when the Preacher meets his own sin in his Subject, and pronounceth sentence against himself while he reads his Text; if thou wouldst have God assist thee, be zealous, and repent; when the Trumpet is wash't, then the holy Spirit (thou may'st hope) will again breath through it.

Secondly, Beware thou com'st not in the confidence of thy own preparation; God hath declar'd himself against this kind of pride; *By strength shall no man prevail*, 1 Sam. 2. 9. A little bread with Gods blessing, may make a Meal for a Multitude, and great provision may soon shrink to nothing, if God help not in the breaking of it: 'Tis not thy Sermon in thy head, or Notes in thy Book, will enable thee to preach, except God open thy mouth; acknowledge therefore God in all thy wayes, and lean not to thy own understand-

derstanding: The swelling of the heart, as well as of the wall, goes before a fall; did the *Ephraimites* take it so ill, that *Gideon* would steal a victory without calling them to his help? how much more may it provoke God, when thou goest to the Pulpit, and passest by his door in the way, without calling for his assistance?

Use 2. *Secondly*, To the People, take heed you do not stop your Ministers mouth; this you may do,

First, By admiring their gifts, und applauding their persons, especially when this is accompanied with unthankfulness to God that gives them; when you applaud the man, but you do not bless God for him. Princes have an evil eye upon those Subjects that are over-popular; God will not let his Creature stand in his light, nor have his honour suffer by the reputation of his Instrument; the mother likes not to see the child taken with the Nurse, more than with her self. O how foolish are we? who cannot love, but we must dote; not honour, but we adore also: He that would keep his posie fresh and sweet, must smell, and lay it down again; not hold it too long in his hand, or breath too much upon it; this is the way soon to welter it. To over-do, is the ready way to undo; many fair mercies are thus over-laid, and prest to death by the excess of a fond affection, or when it is accompanied with detracting of others; the abilities of one are cryed up, to cry down another; I am of *Paul*, and I of *Apollos*; thus the Disciples of either advanced their Preacher, to hold up a Faction.

Secondly, You may provoke God to withdraw his assistance, by expecting the benefit from man, and not from God; as if it were nothing but to take up your Cloak and Bible, and you are sure to get good by such a ones Ministry; this is like them in *James*, that say, *We will go into such a City, and get gain*; as if it were no more to hear with profit, than to go to the Tap, and draw Wine or Beer in your own Cellar. It is just thou shouldst find the Vessel frozen, the Minister, I mean, straitned, and his abilities bound up, because thou com'st to him, as unto a God, who is but a poor Instrument. O say not to him, give me grace, give me comfort, as *Rachel* ask't children of her husband; but go to thy God for these, in thy attendance on man.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, By rebelling against the light of Truth that shines forth upon you in his Ministry. God sometimes stops the Ministers mouth, because the People shut their hearts; why should the Cock run to have the water spilt upon the ground? Christ himself did not many mighty works, *he could not* (saith *Mark*) in his own Countrey, because of their unbelief: *Dei justitia non permittebat, ut sanctum canibus daretur*, saith *Brugensis* upon the place. It is just God should take away the Ministry, or stop the Ministers mouth, when they despise his Counsel, and the Word becomes a reproach to them; I am sure it is a sad damp to the Ministers spirit, that preacheth long to a gain-saying people, and no good *omen* to them. The mothers milk goes away sometimes before the Childs death: God binds up the Spirit of his Messengers in judgment, *Ezek.* 3. 26. *I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be a reprover to them, for they are a rebellious house.*

CHAP. IV.

Sheweth what a Mystery is, and in what Respects the Gospel is so.

THE third Branch in the Division of the words, presents us with the end why he desires their prayers for utterance to be granted him, expresst in these words, *That I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the Mystery of the Gospel*, where there are these three Observables. *First*, The sublime nature of the *Gospel*, it is a *Mystery*. *Secondly*, Wherein lies the work of a Gospel-Minister, *To make known the Mystery of the Gospel*. *Thirdly*, The manner how he is to perform this work, *That I may open my mouth boldly*. *First*, of the *first*.

Sect. 1.

Observ. THE Gospel is a Mystery; the Greek word μυστήριον, some derive from μύω, to teach any secret belonging to Religion; others of μυω or μυζω, to shut the mouth, because those that were initiated, or admitted to be present at the religious Rites and Mysteries of the Heathens (who were call'd μυσται) might not reveal them to those that were ἀμύητοι, or not initiated; therefore they had an Image before the Temple, holding his finger upon his mouth, to put them in mind as they went in and out, of keeping secret what was done within. Indeed the Mysteries in their Idolatrous worship were so impure and filthy, that nothing but secrecy could keep them from being abhorr'd and detested by the more sober part of Mankind; and it is not unworthy of our Noting, what I find observed to my hand by a learned Pen, That the Spirit of God should make choice of that Word in the *New Testament* so often, to express the holy Doctrine of Truth and Salvation contained in it, which was so vilely abused by those Heathenish Idolaters; surely it shewes them to be over-scrupulous, that judge it unlawful any way to make use of those names or things which have been abused by Heathens or Idolaters. *B. Sanderson on* 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. But to return to the word *Mystery*; it hath obtain'd in our usual speech to be applied to any secret, natural, civil, or religious, which lies out of the Road of vulgar understandings. In Scripture it is generally used for religious secrets; and it is taken both in an evil sense, and in a good.

First, In an evil sense, 2 *Thes.* 2. 7. The Mystery of iniquity doth already work; whereby is meant the secret rising of Antichristian Dominion, whereof some foundations were laid even in the Apostles dayes; Errour is but a day younger than Truth; when the Gospel began first to be preach't by Christ and his Apostles, Errour presently put forth her hand to take it by the heel, and supplant it. The whole System of Antichristianism is a mystery of policy and impiety; Mystery is writ upon the Whore of *Babylons* forehead, *Rev.* 17. 2. And *Casaubon* tells us the same word was writ upon the Popes *Myter*; if so, it is well he would own his name: My soul, enter not thou into their secrets.

Secondly,

Secondly, In a good ſenſe, ſometimes for ſome particular Branch of Evangelical Truth: Thus the rejection of the *Jewes*, and calling of the *Gentiles*, call'd a Myſtery, *Rom.* 11.25. The wondertul change of thoſe that ſhall be upon Earth at the end of the World, 1 *Cor.* 15.51. The Incarnation, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion of Chriſt, 1 *Tim.* 3.16. with others. Sometime for the whole body of the Goſpel, as to the Doctrine of it, call'd a Myſtery of Faith, 1 *Tim.* 3.9. As to the purity of its precepts, and Rules for a holy life, a Myſtery of godlineſs. As to the Author, Subject and End of it, called the Myſtery of Chriſt, *Epheſ.* 3.4. It was revealed by him, treats of him, and leads ſouls to him; and laſtly, in regard of the bleſſed Reward it promiſeth to all that ſincerely embrace it; called the Myſtery of the Kingdom of God, *Mark* 4.11. This Goſpel is the glorious Myſtery we are now to ſpeak of; and in the ſecond place come to ſhew in what reſpect it is a Myſtery, or why ſo called by the Spirit of God.

Sect. 2.

Firſt, BEcauſe it is known only by Divine Revelation, ſuch a ſecret it is, that the wit of man could never have found out: There are many ſecrets in nature, which with much plodding and ſtudy have at laſt been diſcover'd; as the Medicinal vertue of Plants, and the like; but the Goſpel is a ſecret, and contains in it ſuch Myſteries, as were *omni ingenio altiora*, as *Calvin* ſaith, What man or Angel could have thought of ſuch a way for reconciling God and man, as in the Goſpel is laid out? How impoſſible was it for them to have conjectur'd, what purpoſes of love were lock't up in the heart of God towards fallen man, till himſelf did open the Cabinet of his own Counſel? or had God given them ſome hint of a purpoſe he had for mans recovery, could they ever have ſo much as thought of ſuch a way as the Goſpel brings to light? ſurely as none but God could lay the plot, ſo none but himſelf could make it known; the Goſpel therefore is call'd, *A Revelation of the Myſtery which was kept ſecret ſince the World began*, Rom. 16.25. 1.

Secondly, Becauſe the Goſpel when reveal'd, its Truths exceed the graſp of humane underſtanding, they are to the eye of our 2.

reaſon, as the Sun is to the eye of our body; ſuch a *nimium excellens*, that dazles and over-powres the moſt piercing apprehenſion; they diſdain to be diſcuſſ't and tryed by humane reaſon, that there are three ſubſiſtances in the Godhead, and but one Divine Eſſence; we believe, becauſe there reveal'd: But he that ſhall flie too near this light, as thinking to comprehend this myſterious Truth in his narrow reaſon, will ſoon find himſelf loſt in his bold enterpriſe: God and man united in Chriſts Perſon, is undeniably demonſtrable from the Goſpel; but alas, the cordage of our underſtanding is too ſhort to fathom this great deep: *Without controverſie* (ſaith the *Apoſtle*) *great is the Myſtery of godlineſs, God was manifeſt in the fleſh*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. 'Tis a Truth without controverſie, ὁμολογουμένως, it is confeſt of all; yet ſuch a Myſtery as is not fordable by our ſhort-legg'd underſtanding; that there is no name but the name of Jeſus, by which we can be ſaved, is the grand Notion of the Goſpel: But how many Myſteries are wrap't up in this one Truth: who that ſhould have ſeen the Babe Jeſus when he lay in the Manger, and afterward meanly bred under a Carpenter, and at laſt executed for a Malefactor, could have imagin'd (as one ſaith) that upon ſuch weak hinges, ſhould move ſuch a glorious deſign for mans ſalvation? But who dares think it unreaſonable to believe that upon Gods report to be true, which we cannot make out by our own underſtanding? Some things we apprehend by Reaſon, that cannot be known by Senſe; as that the Sun is bigger than the Earth; ſome things by Senſe, which cannot be found out by Reaſon; that the Loadſtone attracts Iron, and not Gold, our eye beholds; but why it ſhould, there our Reaſon is dunc'd and pos'd: Now if in Nature we queſtion not the truth of theſe, though Senſe be at a loſs in one, and Reaſon in the other; ſhall we in Religion doubt of that to be true, which drops from Gods own mouth and pen, becauſe it exceeds our weak underſtanding: Wouldſt thou ſee a Reaſon, ſaith *Auguſtine*, for all that God ſaith, look into thy own underſtanding, and thou wilt find a Reaſon, why thou ſeeh not a Reaſon?

SECT.

SECT. 3.

Thirdly, 'TIS a Mystery, in regard of the paucity of those to whom it is reveal'd; secrets are whisper'd into the ears of a few, and not exposed to all. *Unto you it is given to know the Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, Mark 4. 11. Who were those, *you?* but a few Disciples who believed on his Name; the greater part of the World were ever strangers to this Mystery; before Christs time, it was inpaled within a little spot of ground of the *Jewish* Nation, since it came abroad into the *Gentile* World, and hath been travelling above sixteen hundred years hither and thither; how few at this day are acquainted with it? Indeed where its glorious light shines long, many get a literal notional knowledge of it; it were strange that men should walk long in the Sun, and not have their faces a little tann'd with it, but the spiritual and saving-knowledge of this Mystery, is reveal'd but to few; for the number of Saints is not great, compar'd with the Reprobate World. 3.

Fourthly, In regard of the sort of men to whom it is chiefly imparted, such as are in Reason most unlikely to dive into any great Mysteries; those who are despised by the wise World, and the great States of it, as poor and base. 1 *Cor.* 1. 26. *Not many wise men after the flesh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the World to confound the wise, the weak things of the World to confound the things which are mighty.* If we have a secret to reveal, we do not choose weak and shallow heads to impart it unto; but here is a Mystery which Babes understand, and wise men are ignorant of it: *I thank thee O Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast reveal'd them unto Babes*: The people, who were so scorn'd by the proud *Pharisees*, as those that knew not the Law, *John* 7. 49. to them was the Gospel reveal'd, while these Doctors of the Chair were left in ignorance; 'tis reveal'd to the Poor many times, and hid from Kings and Princes; Christ passeth often by Pallaces to visit the poor Cottage. *Herod* could get nothing from Christ (who out of curiosity so long desired to see him) *Luk.* 23. 8. whereas the poor woman of *Samaria* with a pitcher in her hand, Christ vouchsafeth her a Sermon, 4.

mon, and opens to her the ſaving truths of the Goſpel; *Pilate* miſt of Chriſt on the Bench, while the *poor Thief* finds him, and Heaven with him on the Croſs; devout women are paſt by, and left to periſh with their blind zeal, while Harlots and Publicans are converted by him!

Sect. 4.

5. *Fifthly*, A Myſtery, in regard of the kind of knowledge the Saints themſelves have of it.

Firſt, Their knowledge is but in part, and imperfect; the moſt of what they know, is the leaſt of what they do not know; the Goſpel, is as a rich piece of *Arras*, roll'd up; this God hath been unfolding ever ſince the firſt promiſe was made to *Adam*, opening it ſtill every Age wider than other; but the World ſhall ſooner be at an end, than this Myſtery will be fully known. Indeed as a River (which may be breaks forth at firſt from the ſmall Orifice of a little Spring) does widen its channel, and grows broader, as it approacheth nearer to the Sea; ſo the knowledge of this Myſtery doth ſpread every Age more than other, and ſtill will, as the World draws nearer and nearer to the Sea of Eternity, into which it muſt at laſt fall. The Goſpel appear'd but a little Spring in *Adams* time, whoſe whole Bible was bound up in a ſingle Promiſe; this encreaſed to a Rivulet by *Abrahams* time, and this Rivulet enlarged it ſelf into a River in the dayes of the *Prophets*; but when Chriſt came in the fleſh, then knowledge flowed in a main, the leaſt in the Goſpel-ſtate is ſaid to be greater, than the greateſt before Chriſt: So that in compariſon of the darker times of the Law, the knowledge Chriſtians now have, is great, but compar'd with the knowledge they ſhall have in Heaven, 'tis little, and but peep of day.

Secondly, It is myſterious and dark: Goſpel-truths are not known in their native glory and beauty, but in ſhadows; we are ſaid indeed *with open face to behold the glory of God*, but ſtill it is *as in a Glaſs*; now you know the Glaſs preſents us with the Image, not with the face it ſelf; we do not ſee them as indeed they are, but as our weak eyes can bear the knowledge of them; indeed this Glaſs of the Goſpel is clearer than that of the Law was, we

ſee

ſee Truths through a thinner veil, Baptiſm is clearer than Circumciſion, Lords Supper than Paſſeover; in a word, New Teſtament than old; yet there is nothing of Heaven reveal'd in the Goſpel, but it is tranſlated into our earthly language, becauſe we are unable, while here below, to underſtand its Original; who knows, or can conceive, what the Joyes of Heaven are, ſo as to ſpeak of them in their own Idiom and Propriety? but a Feaſt we know, what a Kingdom is, we underſtand; with Riches and Treaſures we are well acquainted; now Heaven is ſet out by theſe things, which in this World bear the greateſt price in mens thoughts; in Heaven is a Feaſt, yet without Meat, Riches; without Money; a Kingdom, without Robes, Scepter and Crown, becauſe infinitely above theſe; hence 'tis ſaid, *We know not what we ſhall be*, 1 Joh. 3. Our apprehenſions of theſe things are mainly compar'd with thoſe under the Law, but childiſh compar'd with the knowledge, which glorifi'd Saints have; therefore 1 *Cor.* 13. 10, 11. as *Paul* ſaith, *He put away childiſh things*, when he grew up into further knowledge of the Goſpel; ſo he tells us of an imperfect knowledge, which yet he had, *That muſt be done away, when that which is perfect is come.*

Sixthly, The Goſpel is a Myſtery, in regard of the contrary operation it hath upon the hearts of men; the eyes of ſome it opens, others it blinds; and who ſo blind as thoſe, whoſe eyes are put out with light? Some, when they hear the Goſpel, are prick'd in their hearts, they can hardly ſtay till the Preacher hath done his Sermon, but cry out, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?* others are hardned by it, and their conſciences ſeared into a greater ſtupidity. At *Pauls* Sermon, *Acts* 17. *ſome mocked*; others were affected ſo with his Diſcourſe, *That they deſired to hear it again*; what a myſterious Doctrine is this, that ſets one a laughing, another a weeping? That is the ſavour of life to ſome, and of death to others. 6.

Sect. 5.

Seventhly, and laſtly, A Myſtery it is, in regard of thoſe rare and ſtrange effects it hath upon the godly, and that both in reſpect of their judgments and practiſe; as the *Goſpel* a *Myſtery* 7.

of

of faith, so it enables them to believe strange Mysteries; to believe that which they understand not, and hope for that which they do not see; it enables them to believe *Three* to be *One*, and *One* to be *Three*; a *Trinity* of *Persons* in the *Deity*, and an *Unity* of *Essence*; a *Father*, not older than his *Son*, a *Son*, not inferiour to his *Father*; a holy *Spirit* Proceeding from *Both*, yet equal to *Both*; it teaches them to believe that *Christ* was born in time, and that he was from Everlasting, that he was comprehended within the *Virgins* womb, and yet the Heaven of heavens not able to contain him; to be the Son of *Mary*, and yet her Maker, that was his Mother; to be born without sin, and yet justly to have dyed for sin; they believe that God was just in punishing Christ, though innocent; and in justifying penitent Believers, who are sinners; they believe themselves to be great sinners, and yet that God sees them in Christ without spot or wrinkle.

Again, As the Gospel is a Mystery of godliness, it enables them to do as strange things as they believe; to live by anothers spirit, to act from anothers strength, to live to anothers will, and aim at anothers glory; they live by the Spirit of Christ, act with his strength, are determin'd by his will, and aim at his glory; it makes them so meek and gentle, that a child may lead them to any thing that is good, yet so stout, that fire and faggot shall not fright them into a sin; they can love their Enemies, and yet for Christ sake, can hate father and mother; it makes them diligent in their worldly Calling, yet enables them to contemn the Riches they have got by Gods blessing on their labour; they are taught by it, that all things are theirs, yet they dare not take a penny, a pin from the wicked of the World by Force and Rapine; it makes them so humble, as to prefer every one in honour above themselves, yet so, to value their own condition, that the poorest among them would not change his estate with the greatest Monarch of the World; it makes them thank God for health, and for sickness also; to rejoyce when exalted, and as much when made low; they can pray for life, and at the same time desire to dye; is not that Doctrine a Mystery which fills the Christians life with so many Riddles?

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The Reaſon why the Goſpel is ſlighted and perſecuted, as alſo why carnal men bungle ſo in matters of Religion, ſhewn from the ſublime Nature of Goſpel-truths.

THis gives us a Reaſon why the Goſpel, with the great offers it makes, is ſo ſlighted and rejected by the wicked World; the cauſe is, the bleſſings of the Goſpel are a Myſtery, and offer'd in ſuch a way, that carnal hearts skill not of them, and therefore care not for them; the things it propounds, are ſuch as like them well enough, might they have them in a way ſuited to their carnal apprehenſions. The Goſpel offers Riches and Honours, who are not taken with theſe? The Goſpel opens a Mine of unſearchable Riches, but in a Myſtery; it ſhews them a way how to be *rich in Faith, rich to God*, rich for another World, while poor in this. Our *Saviour* went about to learn the *young man* in the Goſpel a way to be rich; not by purchaſing more Land, but by ſelling what he had, but he would not follow his Counſel: The Goſpel offers pleaſures and delights, and theſe the ſenſual World like well enough, but alas, they pleaſe not their carnal courſe palate, becauſe they are pleaſures in a Myſtery, pleaſures in mourning for ſin, and mortifying of ſin, not pleaſures in ſatisfying them: Pleaſures in communion with Chriſt at an Ordinance, not with a knot of good Fellows over a Pot at an Ale-houſe; pleaſures to the eye and palate of faith, not of ſenſe; to feed their ſouls, not pamper and fat their bellies: In a word, the Goſpel makes diſco- *Uſe 1.*

very of high and choice notions; surely now those, who are the more sober part of the World, Bookish men, and in love with good literature, whose souls crave intellectual food, and prize a Lecture more than a Feast, these will be highly pleased with the Truths the Gospel brings to light, being such rare Mysteries, that they can find in no other Book; yet alas! we see that the Gospel doth as little please this sort and rank of men, as any other; had it been fill'd with flowers of *Rhetorick*, *Chymical* Experiments, *Philosophical* Notions, or Maxims of *Policy*; O how greedily would they have embrac'd it? but it is wisdom in a Mystery. 1 *Cor.* 2. 6, 7. *We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the Wisdom of this World, nor of the Princes of this World, that come to nought.* *Bradwardine* a great Scholar, before he was meeken'd by the grace of the Gospel, slighted *Pauls* Epistles (as afterward he confest), because he did not express *Ingenium Metaphysicum*, a Metaphysical Head in his Discourses. N B.

2. *Secondly*, It shews us the Reason why the Gospel and its Professors are not only slighted, but hated and persecuted.

1. For the Gospel, it is a Mystery, which the World knows not, and therefore oppos'd by it: Ignorance is the mother of persecution; *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do*: The greatest Enemies the Gospel ever had, were not the sensual, and open profane (though these bad enough) but the superstitious and ignorantly devout, these have been they who have shewn most fierceness and fury against the Gospel; *Paul* tells us of the *devout* persons that cruelly persecuted him, *Acts* 13. 50. None more hot against the Truth, than *Paul* himself, who was a strict *Pharisee*, but bloody Enemy against the Truth; what Reason then have we to pray for the encrease of Gospel-light, the more the Gospel is known, the more kindly will it be entertain'd.

Again, The Professours of the Gospel, why are they so hated and maligned, but because they partake of the mysterious Nature of the Gospel, and therefore their worth is not known? They are high-born, but in a Mystery, you cannot see their Birth by their outward breeding; Arms they bear, Revenues they have to live on, by which the World judges the greatness of Persons and Families: No, their outside is mean, while their inside is glorious; and the World values them by what they know and see of their external port, and not by their inward graces; they pass as a

Prince

Prince in a disguise, of some poor mans cloaths through the world, and their Entertainment is accordingly. Had Christ put on his Robes of Glory and Majesty when he came into the World, surely he had not gone out of it with so shameful and cruel a death; the World would have trembled at his Foot-stool, which we see some of them did, when but a beam of his Deity look'd forth upon them. Did Saints walk on Earth in those Robes which they shall wear in Heaven, then they would be fear'd and admir'd, by those who now scorn and despise them? But as God should not have had his design in Christs first coming had he so appeared, so neither would he in his Saints, did the World know them, as one day they shall; therefore he is pleas'd to let them lie hid under the mean coverings of poverty, and other infirmities, that so he may exercise their suffering graces, and also accompliſh his wrath upon the wicked for theirs against them.

Thirdly, The Gospel is a Mystery; this shews us the Reason why carnal men do so bungle, when they meddle with matters of Religion; let them speak of Gospel-truths, what ignorance do they shew? Even as a Countrey-man chops *Logick*, and speaks of the *liberal Arts*, so they of heavenly Matters: Do we not see that those who in worldly Affairs will give you a wise and solid answer, in the truths of the Gospel they speak like Children and Babes; yea, even those that have some brain-knowledge of the Scriptures, how dry and unsavoury is their Discourse of spiritual things? they are like a Parable in a fools mouth; so when they engage in any duty of Religion, put them to pray, hear the Word, or meditate upon what they have heard, you had as good give a Workmans Tools to him that was never of the Trade; they know not how to handle them, they go ungainsomly about the work, and cut all into Chips; every Trade hath its Mystery, and Religion above all other Callings, which none but those that are instructed in it, know how to manage. 3.

CHAP. VI.

Several Duties prest upon Saints from the mysterious Nature of the Gospel.

Use. 2. FOR Exhortation, to two sorts.
First, To the Saints, who are instructed in this Mystery.

SECT. I.

I. *First*, BE thankful that ever God reveal'd it to thee; O what a mercy is this, that thou hast life and immortality brought to light, that thy ears hear this joyful sound? never came such joyful News to Town, as the Gospel brings; what a poor *Nation* was this of ours, before the Gospel-day broke among us? bless God thy lot is cast where this Sun is up; the Gospel was indeed early preach't in the World, *Adam* had it soon after his Fall; but a short Gospel, a Mystery indeed to him, wrapt all up in one Promise, and that a dark one; but now that one wedge of gold is beaten out into the whole Bible, a Gospel writ at length, and not in figures; you hear the Gospel not preach't in Law-terms, as the *Jewes* did under *Moses* his Pedagogy; but Gospel in Gospel-language; the Vail is taken off, which hid the beauty of Gospel-truths from their face; you hear it after it hath been rescu'd out of *Antichrists* hands, by whom for many Ages it was kept Prisoner; you live not in those dark times, when Gospel-truths were embased with the mean allay of *Schoolmens* subtilties, and superstitious vanities, when more stones were given to break the teeth, than bread to feed the souls of people. The Conduit of

of the Goſpel now runs with wine, not twice or thrice a year, on ſome gaudy Feſtival day, but conſtantly, every Sabbath-day you have your fill of its ſweeteſt truths; were it not ſad, if they ſhould be found to have been more thankful for the little dawning of Goſpel-light, which then but peep'd forth, than you for its Meridian light, who live to ſee the Sun of Righteouſneſs with his healing wings ſpread forth upon you? but eſpecially bleſs God for any inward light and life thou haſt receiv'd from this Goſpel; God hath done more for thee in this, than for thouſands thou liveſt among, and thoſe no mean ones neither; to this day God hath not given thy carnal Neighbours eyes to ſee, nor hearts to perceive that Myſtery which is unfolded unto thee; are you thankful to him that hath taught your worldly Trade, by which you pick a ſmall livelihood for your body? O what praiſe then doſt thou owe to thy God, who by inſtructing thee in this Myſtery, hath learn't thee an Art for ſaving of thy ſoul? Trumpeters delight to ſound where they have the beſt Eccho; God delights to give his mercy to thoſe that will moſt reſound his praiſe.

SECT. 2.

Secondly, THE Goſpel is a Myſtery, therefore reſt not in thy preſent attainments, either in thy knowledge, as it is a Myſtery of Faith, or thy practice, as it is a Myſtery of Godlineſs. 2.

Firſt, Reſt not in thy preſent knowledge; 'tis like thou know'ſt much to what once thou didſt, but thou know'ſt little to what thou mayſt; ſome Books are learnt at once reading, but the Goſpel is a Myſtery that will take up more than thy life-time to underſtand it. Myſteries are here ſown thick, thou diggeſt where the Springs riſe faſter upon thee, the further thou goeſt; God tells not all his ſecrets at once, here *a little*, and *there a little*; *men ſhall run too and fro, and knowledge ſhall be encreaſed*, Dan. 12. 4. The Merchants Ship takes not in all her lading at one Port, but ſails from one to another for it; neither doth the Chriſtian enrich himſelf with this heavenly Treaſure all at one time, or in one Ordinance; the true Lover of Learning, gives not over his chaſe and purſuit for a little ſmattering knowledge he gets, but rather having got the ſcent

ſcent how ſweet learning is, puts on with fuller cry for what he wants: The true Doctor ſtudies harder than the freſh man, becauſe as he knows more of learning, ſo by that knowledge he underſtan ds his own deficiency better; for the higher he aſcends the hill of learning, the more his proſpect enlargeth, while the other ſtanding at the bottom, thinks he knows all in his little.

Secondly, In thy practice, as it is a Myſtery of godlineſs, let not a little grace ſerve thy turn, when thou mayſt have more; which that you may do, 1. Compare not thy ſelf with thoſe that have leſs than thy ſelf, but look on thoſe that have far exceeded thee; to look on our Inferiours occaſions pride, *I am not as this Publican*, ſaith the *Phariſee*; but looking on others more eminent than our ſelves, will both preſerve humility, and be a ſpur to diligence: *Miltyades* his Victories, would not ſuffer *Themiſtocles* (then a young man, to ſleep) the progreſs that ſome have made in grace (didſt thou but keep them in thine eye) would not ſuffer thee to be quiet, who art now lagging ſo far behind, till thou haſt overtaken them: May be thou haſt got ſome victory over thy paſſion, and art not ſuch a Bedlam in thy fury as others; but didſt thou never hear how meek a man *Moſes* was, that could bear the murmurings of the multitude, yea, envy of his brother and ſiſter, and yet his heart not take fire? Thou haſt ſome good affections towards God, but how far ſhort of holy *Davids* zeal, whoſe heart did run out to God, as ſoon as his eyes were open in the morning? *when I awake, I am ſtill with thee*; thrice a day, yea, ſeven times a day he would praiſe his God; thou haſt ſome patience, but haſt thou learnt to write after *Jobs* Copy? thou art not without faith, but art thou like *Abraham*? ſtrong in faith to follow God, when thou know'ſt not whither he will lead thee. *Secondly*, The grace thou haſt will ſoon be leſs, if thou add'ſt not more to it; thou art upon a ſwift ſtream, let thy Oar miſs its ſtroak, and thou fall'ſt backward; there is not ſuch a thing in Religion, as a ſaving Trade of godlineſs: Some men in their worldly Trade can ſay at the years end, they have neither got nor loſt; but thou canſt not ſay thus at the dayes end, thou art at night better or worſe than thou wert in the morning. *Thirdly*, 'Tis the deſign of the Goſpel to give grace in great meaſures; Chriſt gives life, *and that more abundantly*, John 10. 10. Now ſhall the Fountain be ſo large, and the Pitcher we carry to it ſo little? where-

wherefore doth God open his hand to ſuch a breadth in the promiſe, but to widen our deſires, and encourage our endeavours? *Fourthly*, The more grace thou haſt got, the eaſier it will be to add to it; a little learning is got with more difficulty by a young Scholar, than a great deal more afterwards.

Sect. 3.

Thirdly, BEAR with one anothers imperfections; you ſee the Goſpel is a Myſtery, do not wonder therefore that any are not preſently Maſters of their Art; Chriſt bears with the Saints imperfections, well may the Saints one with another; how raw were the Diſciples in their knowledge? how long did they ſtand at one Leſſon before they could learn it? *Do you now believe?* ſayes *Chriſt*, John 16. 31. He had born with them long, and inculcated the ſame thing often, before it entred their minds; yet alas, we can hardly have a good opinion of, or hold communion with thoſe that are not every way of our judgment, and cannot ſee things ſo clear as our ſelves; ſurely we miſtake the nature of the Goſpel, as if there were none but plain points in it; bleſſed be God, as to principles neceſſary to ſalvation; though their nature be high and myſterious, yet they are clearly and plainly aſſerted in the Word: *Without controverſie, great is the Myſtery of godlineſs*, 2 Tim. 3. ult. Godlineſs is a Myſtery, but it is without controverſie, as to the main fundamental points and practiſes of it, there is no diſpute among the faithful; but there are ſome points more remote from the vital parts of Religion that have knots not eaſily untyed, which makes ſome difference of judgment; but it is not every exceſs or defect makes a Monſter (as ſix or four fingers on the hand) but an exceſs or defect in ſome principal part; neither doth every miſtake make a Monſter in Religion: Remember that the Goſpel is a Myſtery, and you will bear with one anothers ignorance the better; and when love hath once laid the duſt which paſſion and prejudice hath blown into our eyes, we ſhall then ſtand at greater advantage for finding out Truth. 3.

Again, Bear with weakneſſes in the practick part of Religion; Godlineſs, as well as the Doctrine of our Faith, is a Myſtery; all the

the servants in a shop cannot work alike, some bungle at it more than other (as their parts and experience are less) all Saints are not of a height; Christ hath some Children in his Family that are led with strings, as well as others that go strongly without such help, some act more upon pure Gospel-principle (love, and a spirit of Adoption) others have not yet worn off their legal fears and terrours; some are got higher up the Hill of Faith, and have clearer apprehensions of their spiritual state, others are nearer the bottom, who (as the Sun newly risen above the Horizon) are wrapt up with many clouds of perplexing fears and doubts: *In a word*, Some are got further out of their passions, have greater mastery over their corruptions, than other of their Brethren; pity thy weak brother, and take him by the hand for his help, but despise him not, *God can make even him stand*, and suffer thee to fall; Christ doth not quench the smoaking flax, why should we? The weak Christian is welcome to his heavenly Father, as well as the strong, why should he not be so to his Brethren? But alas, the Proverb is here too true, *Better speak to the Master, than the man; the Father, than the Child*: Those that can be so bold with God, dare not be free with their Fellow-servants and Brethren.

Sect. 4.

4. *Fourthly*, IS the Gospel a Mystery, then Christian long for Heaven; there, and only there shall this Mystery be fully known; the great things which were spoken concerning the Gospel-Church, made many Saints and *Prophets* before Christs time, desire to see those happy times wherein such Revelations should be made; how much more should we long for Heaven, where this great Mystery shall be fully open'd, and every Box of this Cabinet unlock't, in which lie so many precious Jewels to this day unseen by any Saint on Earth! then it will be said, *The Mystery of God is finished*, Rev. 10.7. Here we learn our knowledge of it by little and little, like one that reads a Book as it comes from the Press, sheet by sheet, there we shall see it altogether: Here we get a little light from this Sermon, a little more from the next, and thus our stock encreases by the addition of a few pence thrown

thrown in, ſome to day, and more to morrow; but there we ſhall have all at once: Here we learn with much pain and difficulty, there without travel and trouble; glorified Saints, though they ceaſe not from work, yet reſt from labour: Here paſſion blinds our minds, that we miſtake Errour for Truth, and Truth for Errour, but then theſe Clouds ſhall be ſcatter'd and gone: Here the weakneſs of natural parts keeps many in the dark, and renders them uncapable of apprehending ſome Truths, which other of their Brethren are led into; but there the ſtrong ſhall not prevent the weak, the Scholar ſhall know as much as his Maſter, the People as their Miniſter: Here the ſquables and contentions among the godly, do leave the weaker ſort at great uncertainty what to think concerning many Truths; but there they ſhall all agree, which comforted that holy man on his death-bed, that he was going thither, where *Luther* and *Calvin* were reconcil'd: Here we are diſturb'd in our enquiries after Truth; one while the neceſſary occaſions of this World divert us, another while the weakneſs and infirmities of our bodies hinder us; but in Heaven, our bodies will call for none of this tending, we ſhall need provide neither rayment for the back, nor food for the belly. O happy Death, that will eaſe us of all the aches of our bodies, and conflicts in our ſouls! Thou art the only Phyſitian to cure all the Saints diſtempers in both; when that bleſſed hour comes, then lift up your heads with joy, for it will lead you into that bliſsful place where you ſhall ſee Chriſt, not a great way off, with the eye of faith in the optick Glaſs of an Ordinance or Promiſe, but with a glorified eye behold his very Perſon, never more to loſe the ſight of him: Thou ſhalt not taſte his love in a little morſel of Sacramental bread, and ſip of wine, but lay thy mouth to the Fountain, and from his boſom drink thy full draught. Thou ſhalt no more hear what a glorious place Heaven is, as thou wert wont to have it ſet forth by the ſorry Rhetorick of a mortal man, preaching to thee of that with which himſelf was but little acquainted; but ſhalt walk thy ſelf in the ſtreets of that glorious *City*, and bleſs thy ſelf when thou art there, to think what poor low thoughts thou and thy Miniſter alſo had thereof, when on Earth thou didſt meditate, and he did preach on this Subject; one moments ſight of that glory will inform thee more, than all the Comments and Books writ of it, were ever able to do; and doſt thou

not yet cry out, How long will it be, O Lord, moſt holy and true, before thou bringeſt me thither? Is not every hour a day, day a month, month a year, yea age, till that time comes? As *Bernard*, upon thoſe words, *John* 16. 16. *A little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me; and again a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me,* paſſionately breaks forth: *Pie Domine, modicum illud vocas, in quo, te non videam? O modicum, modicum longum;* Holy Lord, doſt thou call that a little while in which I ſhall not ſee thee? O this little, is a long little while!

N.B.

CHAP. VII.

An exhortation to ſtudy this myſtery of the Goſpel, with ſome directions thereunto given.

2. BE you provoked, who are yet ſtrangers to this myſtery, to get the knowledge of it? yea, endeavour to gain an intimate acquaintance with it: To move you thereunto, I ſhall make uſe only of theſe two Arguments.

SECT. I.

1. *Firſt.* CONſider the Author of this Myſtery: *Secondly*, The ſubject matter of it.

Firſt, The Author of it; that Book muſt needs be worth the reading, which hath God for the Author; that myſtery deſerve our knowledge, which is the product of his infinite wiſdom and love; there is a divine glory ſitting upon the face of all Gods works; it is impoſſible ſo excellent an Artiſt ſhould put his hand to

to an ignoble work. *Psal.* 104. 24. *How manifold are thy works, O Lord! in wisdom hast thou made them all.* But there is not the same glory to be seen in all his works. Our *Apostle* tells us, *there is one glory of the Sun, and another glory of the Moon, one starre differs from another in glory.* Now among all the works of God, that of Mans Redemption may well pass for the Master-piece; the World it self was set up to be a Stage for the Acting of this piece of providence, wherein πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ, *the manifold wisdom of God* is so curiously wrought, that Angels themselves pry into it, and are wrapt up into an admiration of it, *Ephes.* 3. 10. 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. Gods works deserve our study, and those most wherein he hath drawn the clearest portraiture of himself. The Gospel-mystery therefore above all other should be searcht into by us, being the only Glass in which the glory of God is with open face to be seen.

Secondly, Consider the subject matter of the Gospel, Christ and the way of Salvation thorow him. What poor and low ends have all worldly mysteries? one to make us rich, another to make us great and honourable in the world, but none to make us holy here, or happy hereafter; this is learnt only from the knowledge of Christ, who is reveal'd in the Gospel, and no where else. No doubt *Solomons* natural History in which he treated *of all trees from the Cedar to the Hyssop, of all beasts, fouls, and creeping things,* was a rare piece in its kind; yet one leaf of the Gospel is infinitely more worth to us, than all that large Volumne would have been; so much more precious, by how much the knowledge of God in Christ is better than the knowledge of beasts and birds. And we have reason to think it a mercy that that Book is lost and laid out of our sight, which we should have been prone to have studied more than the Bible; not that it was better, but more suitable to the mould of our carnal minds. But to a gracious soul, enlightned with saving knowledge, no Book to this of the Bible. *Paul* was a bred Scholar, he wanted not that learning which commends men to the world, yet counts all dung and dogs meat in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ his Lord, *Phil.* 3. 8. Well might he call it dogs meat; for a man may feed all his lifetime on humane learning, and die (in Scripture sense) a Dog

2.

at last. It was the saying of *Bonaventure*, that he had rather lose all his *Philosophy*, than one *Article of his Faith*. We read that those *Acts* 9. were no sooner converted, but they *burnt their books of curious Arts*; neither were they losers by it, for they had got acquaintance with one Book that was worth them all. Of all Creatures in this visible world, Light is the most glorious: Of all Light, the Light of the Sun without compare excels the rest. Were this eye of the world put out, the earth would be a grott, a grave, in which we should be buried alive. What were the *Egyptians* while under the plague of Darkness, but like so many dead men? they had friends but could not see them, estates abroad in the fields but could not enjoy them. Now what the Sun is to the sensible world, that is Christ in the Gospel to the intellectual world of souls: without this light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ, what can the soul do or enjoy aright? mans soul is of high, yea royal extraction, for *God is the Father of Spirits*, but this child meets his heavenly Father in the dark, and knows him not; *He was in the world, and the World was made by him, and the world knew him not*, John 1. 10. And as it is of high birth, so intended for a high end, to glorifie and enjoy God its Maker. Now for want of the knowledge of Christ it can do neither, but debaseth it self to the drudgery of sin, and sensual embraces of the creature, instead of God, for whom it was at first made; like the Son of some great Prince, who not knowing his Royal descent, casts himself away in marriage on some beggars daughter. O how should we prize and study this mystery therefore, that brings us to the true knowledge of God, and the way how we may recover our interest in him, and happiness with him? Mans primitive happiness consisted in Gods love to him, and his likeness to God. The Gospel discovers a way how man may be restored to both. The first it doth as it is a mystery of Faith, by revealing Christ and his attonement for our reconciliation with God. The latter as it is a mystery of Godliness, and the instrument which Christ useth in the hand of his Spirit to create man anew, and as it were the tool to re-ingrave the image of God upon him with.

SECT.

SECT. 2.

BUT how may we be led into the saving knowledge of this mystery?

First, Think not to obtain it by the strength of thy reason or natural parts; 'tis not learnt as other secrets in nature or humane Arts, of which those that have the most piercing wit and strongest brain, soonest get the mastery. None have been more mistaken, or err'd more foully in their apprehensions about Gospel-truths, than the greatest Scholars, sons of Reason, and men admired for their parts and learning; the cause whereof may be partly their pride and self-confidence, which God ever was and will be an enemy to; and also because the mysteries of the Gospel do not suit and jump with the principles of carnal reason and wisdom, whence it comes to pass that the wiser part of the world (as they are counted) have commonly rejected the grand principles of Evangelical Faith as absurd and irrational. Tell a wise *Arrian*, that Christ is God and man in one person, and he laughs at it, as they did at *Paul* when he mentioned the Resurrection of the body, *Acts* 17. 32. because the key of his understanding fits not the Wards of this Lock; when a merit-monger hears of being justified by Faith, and not by works; it will not go down with him. It seems as ridiculous to him, that a man should be justified by the righteousness which another fulfills, as for a man to live by the meat another eats, and be warm with the cloaths another wears; tell him when he hath lived never so holily, he must renounce his own work, and be beholden to anothers merit, you shall as soon perswade him to sell his estate, to get his living by begging at anothers door. These are *hard sayings*, at which they take offence, and go away, or labour to pervert the simplicity of Gospel-Revelation to their own sence. Resolve therefore to come (when thou readest the Gospel) not to dispute with thy Maker, but to believe what he reveals to be his mind. Call not divine mysteries to give an account to thy shallow understanding? What is this but to try a Prince at a Subjects Bar? When thou hast laid aside the pride of thy reason, then thou art fit to be admitted a Scholar in Christs School, and not till then. 1.

But

Object. *But must we cease to be men, when we become Christians?*

Answ. No, we cease not to be men, but to be proud men, when we lay aside the confidence of our own understanding to acquiesce in the wisdom and truth of God. An implicite faith is absurd and irrational, when a man requires it of us, who may deceive or be deceived in what he saith. But when God speaks, 'tis all the reason in the world we should believe what he saith to be true, though we cannot comprehend what he saith; for we know he who is infinite wisdom cannot himself be deceived, and he who is Truth and Faithfulness will not deceive us.

Sect. 3.

2. *Secondly.* THou must become a Disciple to Christ; men do not teach strangers that pass by their door, or that come into their shops, the mystery of their Trade and Profession; but their servants, and such as are willing to be bound Apprentices to them: neither doth Christ promise to reveal the mysteries of the Gospel to any, but those that will give up their names to be his servants and disciples; *Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables*, Mark 4. 11. When once thou hast subscribed to the Covenant of the Gospel, thy Indenture is sealed; Christ is now thy Master, he takes thee for one of his Family and charge, and so will look to thy breeding and education; but for those, on whose hearts and affections he hath no hold, they come may be to the Ordinance, but when the Sermon is done, return to their old Master again, sin is still their trade, and Satan their Lord, is it like that Christ should teach them his trade? the mystery of iniquity and of godliness are contrary, the one cannot be learnt, till the other be unlearn'd.

3. *Thirdly*, If thou wouldst learn this mystery to any purpose, content not thy self with a brain-notional knowledge of it. The Gospel hath respect both to the head and heart, understanding and will: To the understanding, it is a mystery of Faith: To the heart and life, it is a mystery of Godliness. Now these two must

must not be severed, 1 *Tim.* 3. 9. *Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.* Here is both the *Manna*, and *a golden pot* to keep it in. Truth laid up in a pure conscience. Knowledge may make thee a Scholar, but not a Saint; Authordox, but not gracious. What if thou wert able to write a Commentary on all the Bible, and from the Scripture couldst confute all the errours and heresies which were at any time broacht and vented against the Truth, what would this avail thee, while thy own lusts confute, yea, confound thy self? *If I understand all mysteries and have not charity, I am nothing*, 1 Cor. 13. 2. He that encreaseth knowledge, and doth not get grace with his knowledge, encreaseth sorrow to himself, yea eternal sorrow. It would be an ease to Gospel-sinners in hell, if they could raze the remembrance of the Gospel out of their memories, and forget that they ever knew such truths. In thy knowledge therefore of Gospel-mysteries, labour for these two things especially.

First, To see thy propriety in them.

Secondly, To feel the power and efficacy of them.

Sect. 4.

First. THy propriety in them. Herein lies the pith and marrow of Gospel-knowledge. When thou findest what Christ hath done and suffer'd for poor sinners, rest not till thou canst say with *Paul*, *Gal.* 2. 20. *Who loved me, and gave himself for me.* When thou readest any precious promise, thou shouldst ask thy own soul, as the *Eunuch* did *Philip* concerning that place of *Isaiah*, *Is it spoken to me, or of some other?* Am I the pardon'd person? Am I the poor in spirit, to whom the Kingdom of heaven is promised? Am I one in Christ Jesus, to whom there is no condemnation? How impatient were those two prisoners, till *Joseph* had open'd their dream, that they might know what should befall them. The Scripture will resolve you whether your head shall be lift up to the Gibbet in Hell, or to the Kings Court in Heaven. Now in reading or hearing it preacht, this is it thou shouldst listen after, and enquire to know, where it layes thee out thy portion, whether in the promise, or in the threatning. There is a sweet Feast the Gospel speaks of, but 1.

but am I one of Chriſts gueſts that ſhall ſit at it? There are Manſions prepared in Heaven, but can I find one taken up for me there?

2. *Secondly*, Labour to find the power and efficacy of Goſpel-truths upon thee. When our firſt Parents had eaten that unhappy fruit which gave them and all man-kind in them their bane, 'tis ſaid then *they knew they were naked*; doubtleſs they knew it before their fall, but now they knew it with ſhame; they knew it, and ſought for clothes to cover them, of which they found no want before. I only allude to the place, many know what ſin is, but it is not a ſoul-feeling knowledge: they know they are naked, but are not aſhamed for their nakedneſs; they ſee no need of Chriſts righteouſneſs to cover it, and of his grace to cure it. Many know Chriſt died, and for what he died, but Chriſts death is a dead truth to them, it doth not procure the death of their luſts that were the death of him: They know he is riſen, but they lie ſtill themſelves rotting in the grave of their corruptions: They know Chriſt is aſcended to Heaven, but this draws not their ſouls after him. A *Philoſopher* being askt what he had got by *Philoſophy*? anſwered, *It hath learnt me to contemn what others adore, and to bear what others cannot endure.* If one ſhould ask, What have you got by knowing the myſtery of the Goſpel? Truly you can give no account worthy of your acquaintance with it, except you can ſay, I have learnt to believe what fleſh and blood could never have taught me, and to do what I never could, till I had acquaintance with its heavenly Truths. This is to know the *Truth as it is in Jeſus*, Epheſ. 4. 21. Had a ſick man drunk ſome potion, which if it works will ſave his life, if not, will certainly be his death. O how troubled would he be, while he ſees ſome operation it hath upon him? what means would he not uſe to ſet it awork? If Goſpel-truths work not effectually on thee for thy Renovation and Sanctification, thou art a loſt man, they will undoubtedly be a ſavour of death to thee. O how can you then reſt till you find them transforming your hearts, and aſſimulating your lives to their heavenly nature? Thus *Paul* endeavour'd to know the power of Chriſts Reſurrection quickening him to a holy life here, without which he could not attain to a joyful Reſurrection hereafter, *Phil.* 3. 10, 11. The Goſpel is a Glaſs, but not like that

in

in which we see our bodily face; this only shews what our feature is, and leaves it as it was, but that changeth the very complexion of the soul from glory to glory, 2 *Cor.*3.18.

CHAP. VIII.

Sheweth it to be the Ministers duty to make known the Gospel, and why, with some questions about it answered.

YOU have had the sublime nature of the Gospel set forth; It is a mystery. Now follows the Second Branch in the words. What the Ministers duty is in reference to the Gospel; and that is to promulge and publish this mystery to the sons of men; in these words, *To make known the mystery of the Gospel.* Here the Ministers work is laid out; he is with all possible clearness and perspicuity to open this mystery, and expose it to the view of the People. Mark, The *Gospel* is his *Subject*, and *to make it known* is his *duty*: So runs the Ministers Commission for his Office, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature*, Mark 16. 15. We hear People sometime saying, The Preacher is besides his Text; but he is never besides his errand, so long as it is the Gospel he makes known. Whatever is his Text, this is to be his design. His Commission is to make known the Gospel; to deliver that therefore which is not reductive to this, is besides his instructions. Nothing but the preaching of the Gospel can reach the end for which the Gospel-ministry was appointed, and that is the Salvation of Souls, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. *After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wis-*

dom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. The great Book of the Creation had lain long enough open before the worlds eyes, yet could they never come to the saving knowledge of God, by all that divine wisdom which is writ with the finger of God in every page thereof. Therefore it pleased God to send his Servants, that by preaching the Gospel, poor souls might believe on Christ, and believing might be saved. No doctrine but the Gospel can save a soul; nor the Gospel it self, except it be made known.

Sect. 1.

1. *First,* NO Doctrine but the Gospel can save a soul. *Galen* may learn you to save your health if you will follow his rules. *Littleton* and other *Law books* will teach you how to save your estates; *Plato* and other *Philosophers* will learn you how to save your credits among men, by an outward just inoffensive life. Their doctrine will be a means to save you from many nasty and gross sins, by which you may be applauded by your Neighbours on earth, and perhaps, less tormented in Hell, where *Fabritius* finds a cooler place than *Cataline.* But it is the Gospel alone whereby you can be taught how to save your souls from Hell, and bring them to Heaven. But what do I speak of these? It is not Gods own law (the Moral I mean), that is now able to save you. God would never have been at such a vast expence (in the blood-shed of his Son) to erect another Law, *viz.* the *Law of Faith*, if that would have served for this purpose; *Gal.*2.21. *For if righteousness come* (yea, or could come) *by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

Quest. *Why then do Ministers preach the Law?*

Answ. If they preach it as they should, they preach it in subserviency to the Gospel, not in opposition. *Qui scit bene distinguere inter Legem & Evangelium, Deo gratias agat & sciat se esse Theologum.* He that knows how to distinguish well between the Law and the Gospel, let him bless God, and know that he then deserves the name of a Divine. We must preach it as a rule, not as a Covenant of life. Holiness as to the matter and substance of

of it, is the same that ever it was. The Gospel destroyes not the Law in this sence, but adds a strong enforcement to all its commands. *Again*, We may and must preach the Law as the necessary means to drive souls out of themselves to Christ in the Gospel. The Gospel is the Net with which we should catch souls, and draw them out of their sinning sinking state. But how shall we get them to come into it? Truly never, except we first beat the River with the Laws Clubbs (threatnings I mean) Sinners lie in their lusts, as fish in the mudd, out of which there is no getting them, but by laying hard upon their consciences with the threatnings of the Law, *Rom.* 5. 20. *Moreover, the Law entred that the offence might abound.* That is in the conscience by conviction, not in life by commission and practice. The Law shews both what is sin, and also what sin is. I mean, it tells when we commit a sin, and what a hateful and dangerous thing we do in committing of it; how we alarum God, and bring him with all his strength into the field against us. Now this is necessary to prepare a way for the sinners entertaining the Gospel. The needle must enter before the thread, with which the cloth is sewed. The sharp point of the Law must prick the conscience, before the creature can by the promises of the Gospel be drawn to Christ. The field is not fit for the seed to be cast into it, till the Plough hath broken it up. Nor is the soul prepared to receive the mercy of the Gospel, till broken with the terrours of the Law.

SECT. 2.

Secondly. THe Gospel it self saves not except it be made known. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost*, 2 Cor. 4. 3. Where God sends no light, he intends no love. In bodily sickness, a Physician may make a cure, though his Patient knows not what the medicine is that he useth. But the soul must know its remedy, before he can have any healing benefit from it. *Luke* 1. 77. *John* is sent *to give knowledge of Salvation for the remission of their sins.* No knowledge, no remission. Christ must be lift up on the pole of the Gospel, as well as on the tree of the Cross, that by an eye of faith we may

look on him and ſo be healed; *John* 3. 14. *Look unto me, and be ye ſaved,* Iſa. 45. 22. A man that ſees, may lead another that is bodily blind to the place he would go. But he that would go to heaven, muſt have an eye in his own head to ſee his way, or elſe he will never come there. *The juſt ſhall live by his faith,* Hab. 2. 4. not by anothers. A proxy faith is bootleſs. Now ſaving faith is a grace that ſees her object; it is the evidence of things not ſeen, *Heb.* 11. that is, which are not ſeen by ſenſe. *I know* (ſaith *Paul*) *whom I have believed,* 2 Tim. 1. 12. Therefore faith is oft ſet out by knowledge; *This is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent,* John 17. 3. Now how can they know Chriſt and life eternal, till the Goſpel be made known, which bringeth him and life by him to light? 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. And by whom ſhall the Goſpel be made known, if not by the Miniſters of it? Thus far the *Apoſtle* drives it, *Rom.* 9. 14. *How ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed? How ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how ſhall they hear without a Preacher?* So that this great work lies at the Miniſters door; He is to make known the Myſtery of the Goſpel.

Object. *But what need now of preaching? this was the work of thoſe that were to plant a Church; now the Church is planted, and the Goſpel made known, this labour may be ſpared.*

Anſw. The Miniſtry of the Goſpel was not intended only to plant a Church, but to carry on its growth alſo. What *Paul plants, Apollos* comes after and *waters* with his *Miniſtry,* 1 Cor. 3. 6. When the foundation is laid, muſt not the houſe be built? and this Chriſt gave Miniſters to his Church for, *Epheſ.* 4. *For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying the body of Chriſt.* The Scaffold is not taken down, till the building be finiſht, but rather to be raiſed higher and higher as the fabrique goes up. Thus *Paul* went on in his Miniſtry from lower points to higher, from foundation to ſuperſtructory truths, *Heb.* 6. 1. A famous Church was planted at *Theſſalonica,* but there was ſomething *lacking in their faith,* which *Paul* long'd to come and carry on to further perfection, 1 *Theſ.* 3. 10. Surely, they that think there is ſo little need of preaching, forget that the Goſpel is a Myſtery, ſuch a Myſtery as can ne-

never be fully taught by the Minister, or learnt by the People. Neither do they consider how many Engineers Satan hath at work continually to undermine the Gospel; both as it is a Mystery of Faith and Godliness also. Hath not he his Seedsmen that are always scattering corrupt Doctrine? Surely then the faithful Minister had need obviate their designs by making known the Truth, that his People may not want an Antidote to fortifie them against their poison. Are there not corruptions in the bosomes of the best, and dayly temptations from Satan and the World to draw these forth? whereby they are always in danger, and oft sadly foyled! In a word, is not grace planted in a cold soyl, that needs cherishing from the Gospel Ministry? Do we not see, that what is got in one Sabbath by the preaching of the Word, is, if not lost, yet much impaired by the next? Truly our hearts are like lean ground, that needs ever and anon a shower, or else the Corn on it withers and changeth its hue. O what barren heaths would the most flourishing Churches soon prove, if these Clouds did not drop upon them? The Christians to whom *Peter* wrote, were of a high form, no novices, but well-grounded and rooted in the faith; yet this did not spare the *Apostle* his further pains, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12. *I will not be negligent to put you alwayes in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.*

SECT. 3.

Use. *First*, TO the Ministers. To reprove some; for encouragement to others. It reproves

1. *First*, *The vain-glorious Preacher*; that instead of making known the Mystery of the Gospel, makes it his errand into the Pulpit to make himself known; who blows up his Sermon (as Butchers do their flesh they sell) with a windy Pomp of words, and frames his discourse rather to tickle their ears, than to profit their souls; to send them home applauding the Preacher for his wit and parts, rather than admiring the excellencies of Christ and riches of his grace. Thus many alas, who should be Factors for Christ, play the Merchants for their own credit. They are sent to wooe souls for Christ, and they speak one word for him,

and

and two for themselves. This is a great wickedness, which blessed *Paul* solemnly clears himself of, 1 *Thes.* 2. 5, 6. *Nor as a cloak of covetousness, God is my witness, nor of men sought we glory.* O how seldom are any converted by such Sermons? These *gloriæ animalia*, vain-glorious Preachers, they may be like *Rachel*, fair, but their Ministry is like to be barren.

2. *Secondly, Abstruse Preachers*, who do not make the Mysteries of the Gospel known, but make Truths plain in themselves mysterious by their dark perplexed discourses upon them. This was the unhappiness of the *Schoolmen* that ruffled and ensnarled the plainest Truths of the Gospel with their harsh terms and nice questions, which else might have been wound off by an ordinary understanding. What is said of some Commentators, the places on which they treat were plain till they expounded them; it may be said of some Preachers, their Text was clear till their obscure discourse upon it darken'd it. What greater wrong can a Preacher do his hearers than this? The Preacher is to open Scriptures, but these turn the Key the wrong way, and lock them up from their knowledge. They are to hold up the Gospel glass before their people, whereby they may see to dress their souls like a Bride against their husbands coming; but by that time, that they have breathed on their Text, it is so obscured that they cannot see their face in it. That water is not the deepest, that is thickest and muddy: Nor the matter always the most profound, when the Preachers expression is dark and obscure. We count it a blemish in speech, when a mans pronunciation is not distinct. I know not then how it should come to be thought a perfection to be obscure in the delivery of our conceptions. The deeper and fuller the Sculpture in the Seal is, the clearer the impression will be on the wax. The more fully any man understands a thing, the more able he will be to deliver it plainly to others. As a clipt stammering speech comes from an impediment in the instruments of speech, so a dark and obscure delivery of our thoughts bewrays a defect in our apprehensions, except it should come from an affectation of soaring high in our expressions above the reach of vulgar understandings. And this is worst of all.

3. *Thirdly, The meer moral Preacher:* The stream of whose preaching runs not in an Evangelical Channel. Moral duties he presseth, and sins against the Moral Law he exclaims against. Neither

ther dare I blame him for that. The Christians *Creed* doth not vacate the *Ten Commandments*. One of the first Sermons our *Saviour* preacht, was most of it spent in pressing moral duties, *Matth.* 5. And never more need to drive this nail to the head than in our days, in which Christianity hath been so wounded in its reputation by the moral dishonesty of many of its Professors. But I level my reproof against them for this, that they do not preach the Law Evangelically, and make that the main design of their Ministry, for which they received their Commission, and that is to make known the Mystery of the Gospel. *To preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the Mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ*, Eph. 3. 8, 9. Did it make the *Father* undervalue *Cicero's* works (which otherwise he admired for their Eloquence) only because his leaves was not perfumed with the sweet Name of *Jesus Christ*. Surely then it is a foul blot upon their Sermons and labours, who reveal little of Christ and the Mystery of the Gospel thorow the whole course of their Ministry. The woe is pronounc'd not only against the non-preaching Minister, but the not-Gospel-preaching Minister also, *Wo to me if I preach not the Gospel*, 1 Cor. 9. 16. An *Ethick* Lecture will not make thy People wise unto Salvation. It were well if thou couldst preach thy drunken Neighbours sober, and the riotous temperate: But this is no more than *Plato* did for his *Polemo*. This may make them men that were before beasts; But thou must get them to be Saints, regenerate ones, preach them out of themselves, as well as out of their flagitious practices; from the confidence of their righteousness, as well as from the love of their sins, or else thou leavest them short of heaven. Well then, smoke, yea fire them out of their moral wickednesses by the threatnings of the Law, but rest not till thou hast acquainted them with Christ, and the way of salvation by him. In a word, Preach moral duties as much as thou wilt, but in an Evangelical strein. Convince them they cannot do these without grace from Christ; for want of which the *Heathens* vertues were but *splendida peccata*, gilded vices. *Per fidem venitur ad opera, non per opera venitur ad fidem.* We must come to good works by Faith, and not to Faith by good works. The tree must be good,

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before the fruit it bears can be ſo: *Without me ye can do nothing.* And then convince them when they are moſt exact in Moral Duties, this muſt not be their Righteouſneſs before God; the Robe which they muſt cover their ſouls with (if they would not be found naked in his ſight) muſt not be the home-ſpun Garment of their own inherent Righteouſneſs wrought in them, but of Chriſts Righteouſneſs which he wrought for them.

CHAP. IX.

An Encouragement to faithful Miniſters, *and how People as well as* Miniſter, *are to make known the* Myſtery *of the* Goſpel.

IT affords a word of ſweet encouragement to the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt; haply you have been long at work for Chriſt, and ſee little fruit of your labours; your ſtrength is even ſpent, and candle is almoſt at the ſocket of old Age; but your people are ſtill carnal and obſtinate, no Sun will tan them, no Arguments move them, filthy they are, and ſo will continue; to Hell they will go, no Gate can ſtop them; thou haſt done thy utmoſt to reclaim them, but all in vain. This is ſad indeed (to them I mean) thus to go to Hell by broad day-light, while the Goſpel ſhews them whether every ſtep of their ſinful courſe leads them: But thou haſt cauſe of much inward peace and comfort, that thou haſt done what God expects at thy hands; remember thy work is, *To make known the Myſtery of the Goſpel*, and upon their peril be it, if they embrace it not. God never laid it upon thee, to convert

thoſe

thoſe he ſends thee to: No, to publiſh the Goſpel is thy duty, to receive it is theirs. *Abraham* promiſeth to diſcharge his ſervant of his Oath, if the woman which he was to wooe for his ſon would not follow him; and ſo will God clear thee of their blood, and lay it at their own door. *If thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedneſs, he ſhall dye in his iniquity; but thou haſt delivered thy ſoul*, Ezek. 3. 19. God judgeth not of his ſervants work by the ſucceſs of their labour, but by their faithfulneſs to deliver his Meſſage: *Though Iſrael be not gather'd, yet ſhall I be glorious in the eye of the Lord*, Iſa. 49.

Secondly, To the People: As it is the Miniſters task to make known the Myſtery of the Goſpel in his Pulpit, ſo your Duty to do the ſame in your lives: The Chriſtians life ſhould put his Miniſters Sermon in print; he ſhould preach that Myſtery every day to the eyes of his Neighbours, which the Miniſter preacheth once or twice a week to their ears: As a true made Dyal agrees with the Sun in its motion, and as a well-drawn picture reſembles the face from which it is taken, ſo ſhould thy Converſation reſemble that Goſpel which thou profeſſeſt; let none have cauſe to ſay, what one once did of ſome looſe Chriſtians, *Aut hoc non eſt Evangelium, aut hi non ſunt Evangelici*: What haſt thou to do with any ſordid and impure practices, who pretendeſt to be inſtructed in this high and holy Myſtery? Thy Chriſtian name ill agrees with a Heathen life; if thou ſuffer'ſt any that is not of thy profeſſion to out-ſtrip thee, yea, but to keep pace with thee in any action that is vertuous, and truly honourable, thou ſham'ſt thy ſelf, and the Goſpel alſo: What a ſhame were it, to find one in ſome trivial Countrey School, that ſhould be able to poſe a Graduate in the *Univerſity*? Thou art train'd up in ſuch high and heavenly learning, as no other Religion in the World can ſhew, and therefore your lives are to bear proportion to your teaching. It was a ſharp reproof to the *Corinthian* Saints, when the *Apoſtle* ſaid, κατ' ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε, 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. *Ye walk as men*; that is, men in a natural ſtate: And he that walks thus like men, will not walk much unlike the very Beaſts; for man is become brutiſh in his underſtanding, and it is worſe to live like a Beaſt, than to be a Beaſt: Surely Chriſtians if you have not your name for nought, you partake of a nature higher than humane; your feet ſhould ſtand, where other mens heads are; you ſhould 2.

live as far above the carnal World, as Grace is above nature, as Heaven is above Earth. Christ would never have stoop't beneath Angels, but to raise your hearts and lives above men: He would never have humbled himself to take the humane nature, but on a design to make us partakers of the Divine; nor would he have walked on Earth, but to make a way to elevate our hearts to Heaven; say not therefore flesh and blood cannot bear such an injury, or forbear such a sensual pleasure; either thou art more than a man, or less than a Christian; flesh and blood never reveal'd the Gospel to thee, flesh and blood never receiv'd Christ; in a word, flesh and blood shall never enter into the Kingdom of God. If thou bee'st a Christian, thou art baptized into the Spirit of the Gospel, thou hast a Heaven-born nature, and that will enable thee to do more than flesh and blood can do. Hast thou no desire to see others converted by the Gospel? Wouldst thou steal to Heaven alone, and carry none of thy Neighbours with thee? Now how shalt thou win them into a good opinion of the Gospel, but by such an amiable life as may commend it unto their consciences? It was a charge long ago laid upon Christianity, that it was better known in *leaves of Books*, than *in the Lives of Christians*: From hence it is, that many are harden'd in their wickedness, and prejudice against the Gospel; he is an unwise Fisherman, that scareth away the Fish which he desires to get within his Net. O offend not those by scandals in thy life, whom thou wouldst have converted by the preaching of the Gospel: There is now a dayes (saith one) much talk, as if the time for the *Jewes* conversion were at hand; but saith he, The loose lives of Christians do so disparage this heavenly Mystery, that the time seems farther of: Indeed the purity of Christians lives is the best attractive to win others to the love of Religion. Had Christs Doves more sweet spices of Humility, Charity, Patience, and other heavenly Graces in their wings as they flie about in the World, they would soon bring more company home with them to the Churches Lockyers: This is the gold that should over-lay the *Temple* of *Christs Church*, and would make others in love with its beauty; this was one happy means for the incredible encrease of Converts in the Primitive times; then the Mystery of the Gospel was made known, not only by the *Apostles* powerful *preaching*, but hy Christians *holy living*; see how they walk't,

Acts

Acts 2. 46. and what was the bleſſed fruit of it, *ver.* 47. *They had favour with all the people, and the Lord added daily to the Church ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.* It would tempt any almoſt but a Devil (who loves to live in the fire of contention, and is deſperately harden'd againſt all goodneſs) to have enter'd their names into ſuch a heavenly ſociety; but when this gold grew dim, then the Goſpel began to loſe its credit in the World, and conſequently its takings. Converts came in ſlower, when thoſe that profeſſed the Goſpel began to cool in their zeal, and ſlacken in the ſtrictneſs of their lives.

CHAP. X.

Boldneſs a Duty in a Miniſter, in what he is to expreſs it, what kind of boldneſs it muſt be, with helps to get it.

THE third Branch preſents us with the manner how the Miniſter is to make known this Myſtery of the Goſpel; *That I may open my mouth boldly.* We muſt here inquire,

Firſt, What this boldneſs is, the *Apoſtle* deſires prayers for.

Secondly, Wherein the Miniſter is to expreſs this boldneſs, in preaching the Goſpel.

Thirdly, What kind of boldneſs it is that he muſt ſhew.

Fourthly, Some helps to procure boldneſs.

SECT. 1.

1. *First*, WHAT is meant by opening his mouth boldly: The words are ἐν παῤῥησίᾳ, and imports these two things.

1. To speak all that he hath in command from God to deliver, this lies full in the *Etymon* of the word: Thus *Paul* kept nothing back of Gods counsel, *Acts* 20. 27. *He concealed not the words of the Holy One*, as *Jobs* phrase is.

2. To speak with liberty and freedom of spirit, without fear or bondage to any, be they many or mighty: Now this is seen, *First*, By speaking openly, and not in Corners; the Trick of Hereticks and false Teachers, *who privily bring in their damnable Doctrines*: It is said, Christ *spake that saying openly*, Mark 8. 32. ἐν παῤῥησίᾳ. *Secondly*, By speaking plainly: It shews some fear in the heart, when our words are dark and shady, that the Preachers judgment or opinion cannot easily be spell'd from his words, he layes them so close and ambiguous; the Minister is to speak truth freely and plainly, this was the *Apostles boldness*, 2 Cor. 3. 12. *Seeing that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech*; πολλῇ παῤῥησίᾳ χρώμεθα, we use great boldness; so your Margin.

SECT. 2.

2. *Secondly*, WHerein the Minister is to shew this boldness in preaching the Gospel.

First, In asserting the Truths of the Gospel: He is not to smother Truth for the face or fear of any: Ministers are call'd *Witnesses*; a Witness is to speak what he knows, though it be in open Court before the greatest of men. *Paul* had a free tongue to speak the Truth, even in Prison, though he was in Bonds, yet he tells us, *The Truth was not bound*, 2 Tim. 2. 9. Some Truths will go down easily, to preach these requires no boldness. The worst in the Congregation will give the Preacher thanks for his pains upon some subject; but there are displeasing Truths, Truths that cross the opinion (may be) of some in the Assembly, to preach

preach these, require a free and bold spirit. When Christ was to preach before the *Pharisees*, he was not afraid to preach against their Errours; had some wary Preacher been to have stood in his place, he would have pitch't upon such a Subject, as should not have offended their tender ears. There are Truths that expose the Preacher to scorn and derision, yet not to be conceal'd; *Paul* preach't the *Resurrection*, though some in the Assembly mock't him for his pains. There are Truths that sometimes may expose the Minister to danger, Truths that carry the Cross at their back; such was that Truth, that *Isaiah* deliver'd concerning the rejection of the *Jewes*. Rom. 10. 20. *But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I Was found of them that sought me not.* This was like to enrage his Countrey-men, and bring their fists about his ears. We read of a *word of patience*, which we are to keep, *Rev.* 7. 10. Such a word as the Preacher had need have good store of patience that delivers it, and Christians that profess it, because it may bring them into trouble, and draw the Persecutors Sword against them. This is not alwayes the same; the word of *patience* in the *Apostles* time, was truths level'd against *Judaism* and *Heathenism*, under the *Arrian Emperours*; it was the Deity of Christ: In *Luthers* time the Doctrine of Justification, and others asserted by him against the Romish Church.

2. *Secondly*, Boldness in reproving sin, and denouncing judgment against impenitent sinners; they are commanded *to lift up their voice like a Trumpet, and tell Jerusalem her sins; preach the Word* (saith *Paul*) *be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke with all long-suffering.* He must reprove and continue therein, while they continue to sin; the Dog ceaseth not to bark, so long as the Thief is in the Yard: A Minister without this boldness, is like a smooth File, a Knife without an edge: A Sentinel that is afraid to let off his Gun, when he should alarum the City upon a danger approaching. Nothing more unworthy, than to see people bold to sin, and the Minister afraid to reprove: 'Tis said of *Tacitus*, That he took the same liberty to write the *Emperours Lives*, that they took in leading them; so should the Minister in reproving sin, be they who they will; not the Beggers sin, and spare the Gentlemans; not the Profane, and skip over the Professors sin; it was all one to Christ, whoever sinn'd, should hear of it: The *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, them he paid to pur-

purpose; neither connives he at his own Disciples, but rebukes them sharply, *Get thee behind me Satan* (saith *he*) to *Peter*: *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* To his own Mother for her unseasonable importunity.

Sect. 3.

3. *Thirdly*, WHAT kind of boldness must the Ministers be?

1. *First*, A convincing boldness: *How forceable are right words*, saith *Job?* and how feeble are empty words, though shot with a thundring voice? Great words in reproving an Errour or sin, but weak Arguments, produce laughter oftner than tears. *Festus thought it unreasonable to send a Prisoner, and not withall to signifie the crimes laid against him*, Acts 25.27. Much more unreasonable is it in the Pulpit to condemn an Errour, and not prove it so; a practice, and not convince of the evil of it. The *Apostle* saith of some, *Their mouths must be stop't*, Tit. 1.11. They are convincing Arguments that must stop the mouth; empty reproofs will sooner open the mouths of those that are reproved, wider, than shut them; the Spirit of God reproves by convincing, *John* 16.8. *And when he is come, he will reprove the World of sin*, ἐλέγξει, *he will convince*: And so should the Minister; this is to preach in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit.

2. *Secondly*, A wise boldness: The Minister is to reprove the sins of all, but to personate none. *Paul* being to preach before a lascivious and unrighteous Prince, touch't him to the quick, but did not name in his Sermon. *Felix* his conscience would save *Paul* that labour; *he trembled*, though *Paul* did not say he meant him.

3. *Thirdly*, A meek boldness: *The words of wise men are heard in quiet*, Eccles. 9. 17. Let the reproof be as sharp as thou wilt, but thy spirit must be meek. Passion raiseth the blood of him that is reproved, but Compassion turns his bowels; the oyle in which the Nail is dip't, makes it drive the easier, which otherwise might have rived the Board. We must not denounce wrath in wrath, least sinners think we wish their misery; but rather with

with such tenderness, that they may see it is no pleasing work to us to rake in their wounds, but do it, that we might not by a cruel silence and foolish pity, be accessory to their ruine, which we cordially desire to prevent. *Jeremiah* sounds the Alarum of Judgment, and tells them of a dismal Calamity approaching; yet at the same time appeals to God, and clears himself of all cruelty towards them: *Jer.* 17. 16. *I have not hastned from being a Pastour to follow thee; neither have I desired the woful day, thou knowest that which came out of my lips was right before thee*: As if he had said, I have deliver'd my Message in denouncing Judgment; (for I durst do no other) but it was with a merciful heart; I threatn'd ruine, but wish't for peace: Thus *Daniel*, he dealt plainly and roundly with the King, but ushers in his hard message with an affectionate Expression of his love and loyalty to him; *My Lord, the Dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies*, Dan. 4. 19.

Fourthly, A humble boldness; such a boldness as is rais'd from a confidence in God, not from our selves, our own parts and ability, courage or stoutness: *Paul* is bold, and yet can tremble, and be in fear; bold, in confidence of his God. 1 *Thes.* 2. 2. *We were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God with much contention*; but full of fear in the sense of his own weakness: 1 *Cor.* 2. 3. *I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.* 4.

Fifthly, A zealous boldness; our reproofs of sin must come from a warm heart. *Pauls Spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the City given to Idolatry. Jeremy* tells us, *The Word of God was as fire in his bones*; it broke out of his mouth as the flame out of a Furnace: The Word is a Hammer, but it breaks not the flinty heart when lightly laid on. King *James* said of a *Minister* in his time, he preach't, *As if Death was at his back.* Ministers should set forth Judgment, as if it were at the sinners back, ready to take hold of him: Cold reproofs or threatnings, they are like the rumblings of thunder afar off, which affrights not, as a clap over our head doth. I told you the Ministers boldness must be meek and merciful, but not to prejudice zeal. The Physitian may sweeten his Pill to make his Physitian swallow it the better; but not to such a degree, as will weaken the force of its operation. 5.

SECT.

SECT. 4.

4. *Fourthly*, WE promiſed to propound ſome helps to procure this boldneſs.

1. *Firſt*, A holy fear of God; we fear man ſo much, becauſe we fear God ſo little; one fear cures another, as one fire draws out another. When your finger is burn't, you hold it to the fire; when mans terrour ſcares you, turn your thoughts to meditate on the wrath of God; this is the plaiſter God layes to *Jeremiahs* wriſts, to cure his anguiſh diſtemper of mans fear. *Jer.* 1. 17. *Be not diſmayed at their faces, leſt I confound thee before them:* If we muſt be broken in pieces (ſo is the Original) better man do it than God; what man breaks in pieces, God can make whole again. *He that loſeth his life for my ſake, and the Goſpels, the ſame ſhall ſave it*, Mark 8. 35. But if God break us in pieces, it is beyond the skill of man *to gather the ſheards, and re make what God hath marr'd.*

2. *Secondly*, Caſtle thy ſelf within the power and promiſe of God for thy aſſiſtance and protection: He that is a Coward in the open Field, grows valiant and fearleſs when got within ſtrong Walls and Bulwarks. *Jeremiah* was even laying down his Arms, and flying from the face of thoſe dangers, which his Miniſtry to a rebellious and enraged people expoſed him; hear what courſe he had in his thoughts to take, becauſe the Word of the Lord was made a reproach to him, and a deriſion daily. *Jer.* 20. 9. *Then I ſaid, I will not make mention of him, nor ſpeak any more in his Name.* Now what kept him from this cowardly flight? *Ver.* 11. *But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible One.* Now he takes heart, and goes on with his work undauntedly; our eye alas is on our danger, but not on the inviſible Walls and Bulwarks which God hath promiſed to ſet about us. The *Prophets ſervant* that ſaw the Enemies Army approaching, was in a panik fright; but the *Prophet* that ſaw the heavenly Hoſt for his life-guard about him, car'd not a ruſh for them all; if God be not able to protect thee, why doſt thou go on his Errand at all? if thou believ'ſt he is, why art thou afraid to deliver it, when he is able to deliver thee?

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Keep a clear conſcience: He cannot be a bold reprover, that is not a conſcientious liver; ſuch a one muſt ſpeak ſoftly, for fear of waking his own guilty conſcience; he is like one that ſhoots in a ruſty foul Piece, his reproofs recoyle upon himſelf. Unholineſs in the Preachers life, it either will ſtop his mouth from reproving, or the Peoples ears from receiving what he ſaith. O how harſh a ſound does ſuch a crack't Bell make in the ears of his Auditours? Every one deſires, if he muſt be ſmitten, that it may be by the hand of the Righteous, *Pſal.* 141. Good counſel from a wicked man, is ſpoil'd by his ſtinking breath that delivers it: Our Saviour was fain to bid them hear the *Phariſees*, becauſe their perſons were a ſcandal to their Doctrine, *Matth.* 23. 2,3. Even thoſe that are good, are too prone to turn their back off the Ordinance, for the ſcandal of him that officiates; this is their weakneſs and ſin, but woe be to them at whoſe wickedneſs they ſtumble upon this temptation. It ſhews the man hath a very good ſtomack, that can eat his Dinner out of a ſlovenly Cooks hands; and a very ſound judgment, and quick appetite to the Word, that can fall too, and make a hearty Meal of it, without any ſqueamiſh ſcrupuloſity or prejudice from the miſcarriages of the Preacher. 3.

Fourthly, Conſider that which thou moſt feareſt, is beſt prevented by thy freedom and holy boldneſs in thy Miniſtry. Is it danger to thy life thou fear'ſt? No ſuch way to ſecure it, as by being faithful to him that hath the ſole diſpoſe of it; in whoſe hands think'ſt thou are thy times, ſurely in Gods? then it is thy beſt policy to keep him thy friend; for, *When thy Wayes pleaſe him, he can make thy Enemies to be at peace with thee.* Man-pleaſing is both endleſs and needleſs, if thou wouldſt, thou couldſt not pleaſe all; and if thou couldſt, there is no need, ſo thou pleaſeſt one that can turn all their hearts, or bind their hands: They ſpeed beſt, that dare be faithful; *Jonah* was afraid of his work, O he durſt not go to ſuch a great City with ſo ſad a Meſſage; to tell them they ſhould be deſtroy'd, was to ſet them a work to deſtroy him that brought the News: But how near was he loſing his life by running away to ſave it? *Jeremiah* ſeem'd the only man like to loſe his life by his bold preaching, yet had fairer quarter at laſt, than the ſmooth Preachers of the Times; however, it is better to dye honourably, than live ſhamefully. Is it thy Name thou art 4.

tender of? if thou beeſt free and bold, the Word thou deliver'ſt will be a reproach and daily deriſion to thee, as once to *Jeremy*: Thou mayſt indeed be mock't by ſome, but thou wilt be reverenc'd by more; yea, even they that wagge their heads at thee, carry that in their conſcience which will make them fear thee: They are the flattering Preachers (who are *partial in the Law*) that become baſe among the people, *Mal.* 2. 9.

SECT. 5.

Fifthly, CONſider, if thou beeſt not now bold for Chriſt in thy Miniſtry, thou canſt not be bold before Chriſt at his Judgment Bar; he that is afraid to ſpeak for Chriſt, will certainly be aſham'd to look on his face then. *We muſt all appear before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, &c.* 2 Cor. 5. 10. Now what uſe doth *Paul* make of this ſolemn meditation? *Knowing therefore the terrour of the Lord, we perſwade men*, ver. 11. It is no wiſdom to provoke the Judge, by flattering the Priſoner: A ſerious thought of that day as we are going to preach, would make us ſhut all baſe fear out of the Pulpit: It is a very ſmall thing to be judg'd by man now for our boldneſs, but diſmal, to be condemn'd by Chriſt for our Cowardize. This is *Mans Judgment-day*, as *Paul* calls it, 1 *Cor.* 4. 3. Every one dares tax the Preacher, and paſs his ſentence upon him, if he pleaſeth not his itching ear; but Chriſt will have his Judgment-day alſo to judge them, that now take upon them to judge others, and his ſentence will eaſily reverſe theirs; yea, even thoſe that now condemn thy freedom to reprove, would be the firſt to accuſe thee for thy ſinful ſilence. The wicked ſervant, who likes the remiſsneſs of his Maſters Government (whereby he may play his ungodly pranks without controule) cries out of him at the Gallows, and is oft heard there, to lay both his ſin and ſad Cataſtrophe of his life (to which it brings him) at his Maſters door; ſaying, If he had reprov'd me, the Magiſtrate had not condemn'd me, if he had done his Duty, the Hang-man had not now been to do his Office. Thus may ſome at the laſt day accuſe their cowardly Miniſters, and ſay, If they had told them their danger, they had not run into it; if they had been bold to reprove their ſin, they had not been ſo impudent

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pudent to live in the practice of it, which now hath brought them to everlasting shame and misery.

Sixthly, Consider how bold Christ was in his Ministry; his very Enemies were forc'd to give him this Testimony: *Luke* 20. 21. *We know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly.* He spar'd not the proudest of them, but to their head reprov'd them, and denounc'd the judgment of God against them; when in the midst of his Enemies, he was not daunted with their high looks or furious threats, but own'd that very Truth, which they made his capital Crime, *Matth* 27. 11. *John* 18. 37. Hence *Paul* saith, *He witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate,* 1 Tim. 6. 13. And useth this as the most powerful Argument to conjure *Timothy* to be faithful in his Ministry. What greater incentive to Valour can the Souldier have, than to see his General before him stand with undaunted Courage where the Bullets flie thickest? Such valiant Captains do not use to breed white-liver'd Souldiers; it is impossible we should be dastardly, if instructed by him, and acted with his spirit: When the *High Priest and Elders saw the boldness of Peter and John* (who were convented before them) they soon knew where they had got this heroick resolved spirit; for it is said, *They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus*, Acts 14. 13. 6.

Seventhly, Pray, and beg prayers for this holy boldness. Thus did the *Apostles* come by it; their boldness was not the product of any natural greatness of spirit they had above others; you see what stout Souldiers they were in themselves, by their poor-spirited behaviour at Christs Attachment, when they all ran away in a fright, and left him to shift for himself; but it was the child of prayer, it was not bred in them, but granted from Heaven unto them at their humble suit; see them praying hard for it, *Acts* 4. 29. *Now Lord behold their threatnings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy Word:* Mark, they do not pray against suffering, but for boldness to preach whatever it may cost them. They desire not to 7.

be excus'd the Battel, but to be arm'd with Courage to ſtand in it; they had rather be lift above the fear of ſuffering, than have an immunity from ſuffering; let God but give them boldneſs to do their Duty, and ſtand to their Tackling, and they have enough. Now ſee how ſoon God ſets his *fiat* to their prayers; *ver.* 31. *And when they had prayed, the place was ſhaken where they were aſſembled together, and they were filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and they ſpake the Word of God with boldneſs.* There's the grace they deſir'd, drop't into their boſom, in a further meaſure than ever they had it. If the Souldier hath a deſire to fight for his Prince, no doubt but he may have Arms for asking; if this be thy ſincere Requeſt, God will not deny it: See them alſo ſending others to God upon this Errand for them, *Col.* 4. 3. and here in the *Text*: Certainly *People* cannot deſire that of God for their *Miniſter*, which both he and they need more. It is a difficult Duty to them, but neceſſary for you; he cannot be a faithful Miniſter, that dares not deliver all his Meſſage. When *Mauritius* the *Emperour* had enquir'd of *Phocas* his diſpoſition, he ſaid, *Si timidus eſt, homicida eſt: If he be timerous, he is a Murtherer:* He that fears his peoples faces, is the man that is moſt like to murder their ſouls; ſo that you pray for your ſelves, while you endeavour to pray down this gift upon your Miniſter.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Why Ministers called Embassadours, their Dignity and Duty shewn therefrom.

For which I am an Embassadour in Bonds.

WE are at length got to the last general Head in the words, the Argument with which the *Apostle* backs his Request, the more effectually to provoke them to the remembrance of him in their prayers, and it is double: *First*, From his Office; *for which I am an Embassadour:* The *second*, From his present afflicted state, *An Embassadour in Bonds.*

First, Of the *first*, his Office. Ambassadours being Messengers of State, sent by *Princes* abroad about the great Affairs of their Kingdom, it behoves all good Subjects to wish them good speed and success in their Ambassy. Upon this account; *Paul* being sent from the great God in Embassage, as the *Apostle* of the *Gentiles*, desires the *Churches* prayers for a happy success to the Message he brings. 1.

SECT. I.

MInisters of the Gospel are Gods Embassadours; the *Apostle* doth not monopolize this Title, as if none were so besides himself; for elsewhere he reads others in the Commission, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *We are Embassadours for Christ*; that is, we *Apostles*, *Note.*

Apostles, who are now upon the place, and in the employment of the Gospel, and such also as shall be dispatch'd after us to the end of the World upon the same Errand. The Authority of the *Apostles* Extraordinary Commission, and that which ordinary Ministers after them have, is the same for substance; only they had their Mission immediately from Christs mouth, and were Oecumenical, where as ordinary Ministers receive it from the *Church* by an Authority deriv'd from Christ, and are fix'd to their particular Orbs, and are to lie as Embassadours legier in some one place, whither they are sent. In handling this point, we shall enquire into these three particulars.

First, Why Ministers are call'd Embassadours.

Secondly, Why God chooseth to deliver his Gospel by Embassadours.

Thirdly, Why he useth weak men, and not glorious Angels to be his Embassadours in this Negotiation.

1. *First*, Why are Ministers call'd Embassadours; and that is,
   1. To set out the Dignity.
   2. The Duty of their Function.

1. *First, The Dignity*: God by this Title, would procure an honourable esteem of the Ministers calling in the hearts of all those to whom they are sent; this is more necessary to the good success of their Message, than is generally thought. I know very well that what Ministers speak on this Subject, they are thought in it to be rather kind to themselves, than friends to the Gospel: Men are prone to interpret it as a fruit of their pride, and an affectation they have of some outward grandure, and worldly pomp, which they design to gain by such a magnificent Title: The *Apostle* himself was sensible of this, and therefore 1 *Cor.* 4. when in the *first verse* he had call'd for that respect which was due to the Ministers Function; *Let a man so account of us, as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*; he gives a *Caveat*, ver. 5. *That they would judge nothing before the time, untill the Lord come.* Then it shall be known from what spirit it is that we Ministers magnifie our Office, and have been acted by in our Function; and also by what spirit they are moved, who vilifie and despise both it and our persons, for our Callings sake.

SECT.

SECT. 2.

NOW the Dignity of Gospel Embassadours, will appear in three things.

First, In the greatness of the Prince from whom they come.

Secondly, The greatness of the Person whose place they supply.

Thirdly, The excellency of the Message they bring.

1. *First*, The Majesty of the Prince from whom they come: Embassadours have their respect according to the rank of their Master that sends them; the greater the Prince, the more honourable is his Messenger. Now the Ministers of the Gospel come from the great God, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, by whom they Reign, and of whom they hold all their Principalities? This is their Master, in whose name they come; therefore *Moses*, when he was to deliver his Message to *Israel*, bids them *ascribe greatness to that God*, whose Name and Will he was to publish, *Deut.* 32. 3. The Potentates of the World have found to their cost, how deeply God takes himself concern'd in the affronts that are done to his servants; what brought *Israels* flourishing Kingdom to ruine, but their mocking his Messengers, and misusing his Prophets? *Then the wrath of God arose against them till there was no remedy*, 2 Chron. 36. 16. We cannot despise the Messenger, and honour his Master that sends him, *Luk.* 10. 16. Few are so bold as to say with that proud King, *Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?* Exod. 5. 2. But too many dare say, who is the Minister that I should obey his Message? Repent at his Summons, tremble at the words he delivers; forgetting alas, they have Gods Authority for what they say; and so by a slinting blow they hit God himself in contemning his Embassadour.

2. *Secondly*, The greatness of the Person, whose place the Minister supplies; Ministers are but Deputy Embassadours, Christ himself had the first Pattent, call'd therefore *the Messenger of the Covenant*, Mal. 3. 1. and the *Apostle of our profession*, Hebr. 3. 1. From him the Ministers receive their Authority: *All power is given to me, Go ye therefore and teach all Nations*, Matth. 28. 18.

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So 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *We pray you in Christs stead be ye reconciled to God.* As if the *Apostle* had said, We do but deliver that message which Christ should and would have done, had he not been called to Heaven about the affairs of his Church, and therefore hath left us as his Deputies to carry on that Ministry which himself began when he was here below, Now, what an honour is it for a poor creature to stand up in Christs room, and bring that message to poor sinners which was first committed unto him?

3. *Thirdly*, The excellency of the Message they bring. There are three kinds of Embassies in the world which make way for their honourable entertainment, that are the Messengers to bring them to any State: *Embassies* for *peace*, *Embassies* for *marriage*, and *Thirdly* for *trade*.

SECT. 3.

1. *First*, EMbassies for peace. Beautiful are their feet, and honour'd are their persons, that bring glad tidings of peace along with them; especially when these four things concur in their Embassage which will be all found in the Ministers negotiation.

1. *First*, When an Ambassadour comes from some puissant Prince, whose power is formidable, and armies irresistable, an Ambassadour from such a Prince to a People naked and unarm'd, for peace and amity, O how welcome is his approach? Such a King we come from, he offers not peace because he cannot maintain a War, or stands in need of our friendship. Sinners need his favour, but he fears not their hostility; never could they yet shoot any of their Arrows so high as heaven, but all have come down upon their own heads. What can he that spets against the Wind, but look to have it blown back upon his own face? and he that fights with God, but expect to have his Weapons beat back to his own head? Worldly Princes treat when they cannot fight: think not so of the great God: his instruments of death are ready, no place where he hath not his armed Troops able to fetch in his proudest enemies. No creature so little, but contains an Army in it big enough to tame the proud-

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est King in the World. The *worm* under *Herods* foot, at Gods command shall seize on him, and eat out his heart. O with what fear and trembling should the Embassadours of this God be received! When *Samuel* the *Prophet* came to *Bethlehem, The Elders of the Town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou in peace?* 1 Sam. 16. 4.

Secondly, When such a puissant Prince sends his Ambassadours for peace to a People that have already felt the impressions of his power, and are pineing under the bleeding miseries which their War with him have brought upon them, O how would they run to open their City-Gates to his Ambassadour? as willingly surely as *Noah* open'd the Window to receive the *Dove* that brought the Olive branch after that dismal Flood. This is the deplored state which the Ministry of the Gospel finds Mankind involved in. What a forlorn condition hath our War with Heaven brought us into? Do we not feel the Arrows of divine vengeance sticking in our very hearts and consciences? the curse of God cleaving to every faculty of our souls, and member of our bodies? Are not all the creatures in arms against us? and doth not Hell from beneath open its devouring mouth upon us, ready to swallow us up in everlasting destruction? And yet are we so stout, that we can find no Lodging in our Town for his Embassadours but a Prison? no entertainment to the offers of Peace they make, but contempt and scorn? 2.

Thirdly, When the terms of Peace he brings are honourable. Gold (we say) may be bought too dear, and so may the peace of one State with another. As when *Nahash* the Ammonite offer'd peace to the men of *Jabesh Gilead*, but upon condition that they should have *every one his right eye thrust out, to lay it as a reproach on Israel*; and therefore was rejected with just indignation; they resolving rather to die with honour, than live with shame. 'Tis the custom among many of this Worlds Princes, to make their demands according to the length of their Sword; where their power is great, 'tis hard to have peace on easie terms. Now, this, one would think, should make the Ministers of the Gospel and their message infinitely welcome to poor sinners, that though they come from the great God that may make his own demands, (for who *may say to God, What doest thou?*) and might not only require the eye out of our 3.

head, but force the very heart out of our body, yet offers peace on such gracious terms, that we could not possibly have framed them so to our own advantage, had we been left to draw them as he of his own free grace is pleased to propound them; there being nothing in the whole instrument of peace provided for himself, besides the securing of his own glory in our Salvation. See a little what he offers to poor sinners, and what he requires of them again. He offers to seal an Act of Oblivion, wherein all wrongs done to his Crown and Dignity in the time of our hostility against him shall be forgiven, and forgotten: So runs the promise, *He will forgive them their iniquities, and remember them no more.* He will not only forgive what is past, but receive our persons into favour for the future. A Prince may save the Malefactors life, but for ever banish his person from Court; but he promiseth access into his presence, *Rom.* 5. 2. *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace* (or favour) *wherein we stand.* Yea, he promiseth to restore the sinner to all that by his rebellion was forfeited. Treason taints the blood, degrades from honour, and confiscates the estate. God offers to take off the whole curse which befell the sinner for his Rebellion, and restores him to his primitive dignity; *He gives them power to become his children*, John 1. 12. and as his children makes them his Heirs, and that not to a *Cabul* here below only, but to Heaven it self, an inheritance in light beyond all expression glorious; for *godliness hath both the promise of this life, and that which is to come.*

Now let us see what he expects at the sinners hand; not to purchase this his favour with a ransome out of his own purse: No, he empties his sons veins to pay that. But he requires us *First*, To lay down the Weapons of our Rebellion, (for he cannot in honour treat with us while we have that Sword in our hand with which we have fought against him.) *Secondly*, To accept our pardon and peace at the hands of free grace, attributing the glory of it to the meer mercy of God as the moving, and Christs satisfactory obedience as the meritorious cause. *Thirdly*, That we shall swear fealty and allegeance to him for the future: How reasonable these are, those that now reject them shall confess, with infinite shame and horrour for their folly, when Christ shall pack them to hell by his irrevocable sentence.

Fourthly,

Fourthly and lastly, When in all this a Prince is real in the offers of peace, he makes and gives full security for the performance of what he promiseth, this must needs make the Ambassadour that brings them still the more welcome. Treaties of peace among men are too often used but as a handsome blind for War; they intend least, what they pretend most. But when an Ambassadour comes Plenipotentiary, and enabled to give full security and satisfaction against all fears and jealousies that may arise in the breasts of those he treats with, this gives a value to all the rest. Now the great God hath wonderfully condescended to satisfie the querulous hearts of poor sinners; guilt hath made man suspicious of God; his own unfaithfulness to God, makes him jealous of Gods faithfulness unto him. Could *Satan* make *Eve* so soon question the truth of Gods promise? He saith but, *Has God said, Ye shall not dye?* and she is presently shaked out of her faith on her Maker to believe her Destroyer? O how easie then is it for him to nourish those suspitions which do naturally breed now in our unbelieving hearts? How oft are we putting it to the question, Will God forgive so great, so many sins? May I venture to believe? Now God gives his Embassadours full instructions from his Word to satisfie all the doubts and scruples, which he injects, or which may arise from our own misgiving hearts. *Tota Scriptura hec agit* (saith *Luther*) *ne dubitamus sed certò speremus.* The whole Scripture drives at this to satisfie our doubts, and assure our hopes in the mercy of God. Saint *Paul* hath a passage something like this, *Rom.* 15. 4. *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* There are many expedients men use to satisfie the minds of those they deal with concerning the truth of their promises, and certainty of their performing them. Sometimes they ratifie them with their seal set to the Writing. Thus God gives the broad seal of the Sacraments, and privy seal of his Spirit, to assure the believer he will perform all he hath promised in his Word. Sometimes, witnesses are called in for further security of the conveighance. Thus in the Purchase *Jeremiah* made of his Kinsmans field, he took Witnesses to the bargain, *Jer.* 32. 10. See Witnesses both in Heaven and Earth, ready to vouch the Truth of what God promiseth, and all agree

4.

in their Verdict, 1 *John* 5. 7, 8. If all these will not do, then an Oath is taken, and this useth to be an end of all Controversies. To this also doth God graciously condescend, not that Gods promise needs the Suretiship of his Oath to make it surer, for it is as impossible God should lye when he promiseth, as when he swears, but to make our faith stronger, which needs such supporters as these to stay and strengthen it; as is hinted in that sweet place, *Heb.* 6. 18. from which one flower the sincere believer may suck honey enough to live comfortably upon in the hardest longest Winter of affliction that can befall him. *Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an Oath, that by two immutables in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have a strong consolation, &c.* Now the greater security God enables his Embassadours to offer poor sinners for the salvation they preach in his Name, the more prodigiously provoking is their unbelief and impenitency who reject it. When *Titus Vespasian* came into *Jerusalem* and saw the unspeakable miseries which the besieged had endured from those three sore plagues; Sword, Pestilence, and Famine, that had so long raged among them, it is said that he broke out into these words, *I am not guilty of all this blood which hath been shed, nor of the miseries this People have endured, they by their obstinacy have brought it upon their own heads.* O how much more may the Embassadours of Christ wash their hands over the heads of impenitent sinners, to whom they have so oft offer'd pardon and peace in Gods Name, (but they would not hearken) and say, We are free from your blood, it is your own obstinacy and desperate impenitency hath undone your precious souls; would you have accepted life at the hands of mercy, you should not have been cut off by the Sword of his justice.

Sect. 4.

2. *Secondly,* Such as come to offer an alliance by Marriage between one State and another, this is one great part of the Ministers Embassage: They are sent to let the world know what good-will the God of Heaven bears to poor sinners, that

that he can be content to bestow his only Son and Heir in Marriage upon them, if they also upon treaty can like the match; nay more, both Father and Son do earnestly desire it; 'tis a match which God himself first thought on for his Son; it sprang from the counsel of his own Will, and when this great intendment was transacted betwixt Father and Son (as it was before the foundation of the world) the Son declared his liking of it to his Father; yea, expres't the dear affection he bore to man-kind; for then it was, that *he rejoyced in the inhabitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.* In pursuance of which, when the fulness of time was come, he took his progress from Heaven to Earth, that by marrying our Nature, he might also enter a near alliance with the persons of believers; this is the match Gods Embassadours come to negotiate with you; the Scriptures are their Credential Letters, that confirm under Gods own hand-writing and Seal, the truth of all they offer in his Name, there you have the picture of this heavenly Prince they wooe your affections for, drawn to the life in his glory, love, and loveliness, that by knowing him, you may the better take liking to his person; there are the rich Bracelets of the promises, which his Messengers are in his Name to deliver to those willing souls that shall entertain the motion, and declare their consent to take him for their Lord and Husband; yea, they have authority to pronounce the contract, and to promise in Christs Name Marriage which at the great day he will perform unto them, 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. *I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you a chast Virgin to Christ.* Stand here and adore ye children of men this low stoop of the Divine Majesty! O that ever it should enter into the heart of the great God to match his Son unto his creature! and that not of the Noblest House among them, for he took not upon him the Nature of Angels, but of Man-kind, not in its primitive state, but when it was lapsed and degraded of its primitive glory. For a high born Prince to take a poor Damosel out of the Beggars row, is a thing that yet the World hath not been acquainted with; but to take one from the meanest Cottage, were not so strange as to take her from the Gaol or Bar, where she is condemn'd for treason against his Royal Person; yet this is the very case, The Lord offers to lift up the head of his Rebel creature out of Prison

ſon where it lies under a ſentence of death for horrid Treaſon againſt his Crown and Dignity, to take it into his Bed and boſome. Truly I know not at which moſt to wonder; whether the mercy of God in making love to us, or our pride and folly that are ſo coy and hardly perſwaded to entertain the motion. Though *Abigal* confeſt her ſelf unworthy to be *Davids* Wife, yet ſhe was too wiſe to ſtand in her own light, by letting ſlip ſuch an opportunity for her preferment, as was not like again to occur; therefore it is ſaid, *She made haſte to go with Davids ſervants.* But alas, how do we either broadly deny, or fooliſhly make excuſe, and hold Gods Meſſengers in ſuſpence from day to day?

SECT. 5.

3. *Thirdly,* SUch as come with Embaſſies for commerce and trade: Suppoſe a Prince had in his Kingdom ſuch rich commodities, without which his Neighbour Nation could not ſubſiſt, nor could find elſewhere: if this Prince ſhould ſend an Ambaſſadour to this people, and offer them a free trade, that they might come as oft as they pleaſ'd, and take of the good things of his Land, O how joyfully would ſuch an Embaſſie be embraced? Mans happineſs on earth lies in a free trade and commerce with heaven; this world is a barren beggarly place, nothing is here to be had that an immortal ſoul can live upon, or find ſatisfaction from. In heaven alone, what it needs is to be found; the food it muſt live on, the cloaths it muſt wear, are both of the growth of this heavenly countrey. Mans firſt ſin ſpoil'd all his trade with heaven: No ſooner did *Adam* rebell, but a War was commenced, and all trade with him forbidden, therefore in our natural ſtate we are ſaid *to be afar off*, and *Without God in the world.* The ſad effects of this loſs, are to be ſeen in the forlorn condition of mans ſoul, which was once ſo glorioufly array'd with righteouſneſs and holyneſs, but now ſhamefully naked, not having a rag to cover its ſhame withal. Now, God ſends his Embaſſadours to offer peace, and with it liberty to return to its firſt communion with him, *Oh every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat, yea come buy wine and milk with-*

without money and without price. He invites all to turn Merchants with heaven, *Come ye to the waters:* By which phrase, the Gospel is compared to a Port Town, or its Key side, to which the Cryer calls people to repair, and buy commodities that are there landed. Here it is that God sets forth the riches of his grace to view and sale without money and without price: That must needs be a gainful Trade, which brings in rich treasure without much cost exported; here is all the riches of heaven to be had, and no money required for the purchase. Can you hear of this Pearl of price, and not turn Merchants for it? Or can your souls be maintain'd by your peddling worldly Trade? O why do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? 'Tis not necessary you should be rich in the world, but 'tis necessary you should have Christ and his grace. In all your pains and travel for the things of this world, you are but Merchant-adventurers, 'tis a hazard whether you get them, or lose your labour: There is no certain rule and method can be learnt for growing rich in the world; there are some poor as well as rich of every Trade; but in this Trade for Christ and his grace there is an Office erected to ensure all your adventure: *His soul shall live that seeks the Lord: He that hungers after righteousness shall be satisfied.*

Secondly, Ministers are call'd Embassadours in regard of their duty as well as dignity; where there is *honos*, there is *onus*; places of honour are places of trust and service. Many like well enough to hear of the Ministers dignity; with *Diotriphes*, they love preheminence, that would willingly be excused the labour that attends it. None have a greater trust deposited in their hands than the Minister. 'Tis *tremendam onus*, a weight that made the Apostle tremble under it, *I was among you* (saith *Paul*) *with much fear and trembling.* To them is *committed the Word of reconciliation*, 2 Cor. 5. 20. If the treaty of peace between God and sinners doth not speed, the Embassadour is sure to be called to an account how he discharged his place; But more of the Ministers duty as an Embassadour, afterwards. 2.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Why God sends Embassadours, why he treats not with sinners in an immediate way, and why he useth men, not Angels.

2. THE second thing we propounded to give an account of, was, Why God would send Embassadours to his poor creature.

I answer, *First*, Negatively. *First*, Not because he needs mans good-will. Earthly Princes their affairs require they should hold a correspondence with their Neighbours; therefore they send Ambassadours to procure peace, or preserve amity: But God can defend his Crown without the help of Allies. *Secondly*, Not because he was bound to do it. There is a law of Nations, yea of Nature, that obliges Princes before they commence a War to offer peace. But the great God cannot be bound, except he binds himself. When *Adam* sinned, God was free, and might have chosen whether he would make a new League with man, or take vengeance on him for breaking his faith in the first.

But Affirmatively, No other account can be given of this, but the good-will and free-grace of God. When Christ (who is the prime Embassadour) landed first on earth, see what brought him hither, *Luke* 1. 7, 8. *Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us.* Tender mercy indeed, for the life of man lay under Gods foot at his pure mercy: He was no more bound to treat with his creature, than a Prince with a Traytor legally condemn'd. Wherever Gods Embassadours

dours come, they come on Mercies Errand; 2 *Chron.*36.15. *The Lord God of their Fathers sent to them by his Messengers, rising up betimes, and sending: because he had compassion on his people.*

But if God will treat with his poor creatures, why doth he it by Embassadours, and not by himself immediately? *Quest.*

This is the fruit of divine indulgence; sin hath made the presence of God dreadful; Man cannot now well bear it. What a fright was *Adam* put into when he heard but the voice of God walking towards him in the Garden, and not furiously rushing upon him? The *Jews* had the trial of this, *Exod.*20. 19. They soon had enough of Gods presence, and therefore came to *Moses*, saying, *Speak thou with us, but let not God speak with us, lest we dye.* *Answ.*

But if God will use Embassadours, why did not God employ some glorious Angel from heaven to bring his message, rather than weak and frail men? *Quest.*

The *Apostle* gives us the reason, 2 *Cor.*4.7. *We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*; ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, *in vessels of a shell.* As the precious Pearl is found in a shell, so this precious treasure of the Gospel shal be found in frail men, that the excellency of the work may be of God. The more contemptible the instrument, the more glorious appears his divine power in using it for so high and noble an end. To see a man wound another with a Sword that is sharp and weighty, would carry no wonder, but to wound him with a feather in his hand, this would speak it a miracle to see men fall down and tremble; when an Angel (a creature of such might and glory) is the Speaker, is no great wonder; but to behold a *Felix* quivering on the Bench, while a man, and he a poor Prisoner at the Bar, preacheth to his Judge, this carries a double wonder: First, that so poor a creature as *Paul* was, and in the condition of a Prisoner, durst be so bold: And also, that so great a person as *Felix* was, should be smitten with his words, as if some Thunder-bolt had struck him. Who will not adore the power of a God in the weakness of the instrument? Had God employed Angels in this business, we should have been in danger of ascribing the efficacy of the work to the gifts and parts of the instrument, and of giving credit to the message for the Messengers sake that is so honourable; but now, God sending those that are weak creatures like our selves, when any thing is done by them, we are forced to say, It is the *Answ.*

Lords doing, and not the inſtruments. What reaſon God had this way to provide for the ſafe-guarding his own glory, we ſee by our proneneſs to Idolize the gifts of men, where they are more eminent and radiant than in others. What would we have done, if Angels had been the Meſſengers? Truly, it would have been hard to have kept us from worſhipping them, as we ſee *John* himſelf had done, if he had not been kept back by the Angels ſeaſonable Caveat, *Rev.* 19.10.

2. *Secondly*, Miniſters being men, have an advantage many wayes above Angels for the work. *Firſt*, As they are more nearly concerned in the meſſage they bring, than Angels could have been; ſo that they cannot deceive others, without a wrong to their own ſalvation. What greater Argument for ones care than his own intereſt? Surely that Pilot will look how he ſteers the Ship that hath an adventure in the fraight. *Secondly*, Their affections have a naturalneſs ariſing from the ſence of thoſe very temptations in themſelves which their brethren labour under: This an Angel could not have; and by this they are able to ſpeak more feelingly to the condition of other men, than an Angel could do. So that what man wants of the Angels Rhetorick, is recompenced with his natural affection and ſympathy flowing from experience. He knows what a troubled conſcience is in another, by having felt it throbb in his own boſome, as God told his People having been themſelves ſojourners in *Egypt*, *You know the heart of a ſtranger*. And who will treat poor ſouls with more mercy, than they who know they need it themſelves? *Thirdly*, The ſufferings which Miniſters meet with for the Goſpels ſake, are of great advantage to their brethren: Had Angels been the Embaſſadours, they could not have ſeal'd to the truth of the Doctrine they preacht, with their blood, *Pauls bonds* were famous at Court and Countrey alſo, *Phil.* 1.14. *Many of the brethren waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to ſpeak the Word without fear*. Angels might have ſounded the Trumpet of the Goſpel with a ſhriller voice; but men alone have pitchers to break (I mean frail bodies) by ſuffering for the Goſpel, whereby the glory of its truths (like the Lamp in *Gideons* ſouldiers hand) ſhines forth upon the eyes of their greateſt enemies, to the confuſion of their faces, and amazement of their hearts.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

An Exhortation to hearken to Gods Embassadours, press't from several Arguments.

ARE Ministers Embassadours? This shews the Gospel-Ministry to be an Office peculiar to some, not a work common to all: An Embassadour we know is one that hath his Commission, and Credential Letters from his Prince to shew for his employment; 'tis not a mans skill in State Affairs that makes him an Embassadour; not ability in the Law that makes a man a Magistrate, but their Call to these places; neither do Gifts make a man a Minister, but his Mission; *How can they preach, except they be sent?* The Rules which the Spirit of God gives about the Ministers admission into his Function, were al to no purpose, if it lay open to every mans own choice to make him a Preacher: *Lay hands suddenly on no man*, 1 Tim. 5. 22. That is, admit none to the Ministry without good proof and tryal; but why should any be set apart for that which every one may do? *Use* 1.

Secondly, Of Exhortation.

First, To the *People*. 1.

Secondly, To the *Minister*. 2.

SECT. I.

First, TO the People: Be perswaded in the fear of God to hearken to the Message these Embassadors bring, what mean you to do in the business they come to treat about? Will you be friends with God or not? Take Christ by faith into 1

your embraces, or resolve to have none of him: We are but Embassadours, back again we must go to our Master that sends us, and give an account what comes of our Negotiation. Shall we go and say, Lord, we have been with the men thou sent'st us unto, thy Message was deliver'd by us according to our instructions, we told them fire and Sword, ruine and damnation would come upon them, if they did not at thy call repent and turn; we laid both life and death before them, and spar'd not to reveal the whole counsel of God for their salvation; but they believ'd never a word we spake, we were to them as those that mock't, or told what we had dream'd in the night, and not the words of truth and faithfulness. O God forbid, that this should be the report which at their return they make to God of their Negotiation! But the more to affect you with the importance of their Message, and your answer to it; *Consider*,

1. *First*, The wonderful love of God in sending you these Embassadours; 'tis not a Prince that sends to one of his own Rank, but a God to his Rebel-creature, against whom he might have sent not an Embassadour to treat, but an Army of Judgments to fight and destroy: 'Tis not against Rebels that are entrench't in some place of strength, or in the Field with a force wherewith you are able to resist his power; but to his Prisoners fetter'd and manicled, to you that have your trayterous head on the Block; 'tis not any need that he hath of your life that makes him desire your salvation. A Prince sometimes saves his Rebellious Subjects, because he needs their hands to fight for him, and weakens himself by shedding their blood; but God can ruine you, and not wrong himself; if you perish, 'tis without his damage. *Luke* 7. 30. *The Pharisees* are said *to reject the counsel of God against themselves*; 'tis you that suffer, not God.

Sect. 2.

2. *Secondly*, Consider what an intolerable affront is given to the Majesty of Heaven by rejecting his offers of grace. Princes Requests are Commands; who dare deny a King what he asks? and dar'st thou a poor Thimble-full of dust, stout it out against thy Maker? it is charg'd upon no less than a King,

as

as an act of unsufferable pride; *That he did evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the Prophet, speaking from the mouth of the Lord,* 2 Chron. 36. 12. But what, must a King come down his Throne, and humble himself before a poor Prophet, that was his own Subject? yes, when he represents the person of that King to whom he was himself a Subject; God will have him tremble, and bow not to *Jeremiah*, but to *Jeremiah, speaking from the mouth of the Lord.* O consider this, ye that think it childish and poor-spiritedness to weep at a Sermon, to humble your selves at the reproof of a Minister, your carriage under the Word preach't, declares what your thoughts of God himself are; when *Naash* slighted *Davids* Embassadors, and abus'd them, the King took the scorn upon himself: *I will publish the Name of the Lord* (saith *Moses*) *ascribe ye greatness unto our God,* Deutr. 32. 3. How should they ascribe greatness to God, while *Moses* is preaching to them? surely he means by their humble attendance on, and ready obedience to the Word he deliver'd in Gods Name.

Thirdly, Consider how much the heart of God is engag'd in the Message his Embassadours bring: When a Prince sends an Embassadour about a Negotiation, the success of which he passionately desires, and from which he promiseth himself much honour; to be oppos'd in this, must needs greatly provoke and enrage him. There is nothing that God sets his heart more upon, than the exaking of Christ and his Grace through him in the salvation of poor sinners; this therefore is call'd his *counsel,* Hebr. 6. 18. *The pleasure of the Lord,* Isa. 53. *Abrahams* servant knew how much his Master desir'd a wife for his son and heir from among his Kindred, and therefore presseth *Laban* with this, as the weightiest Argument of all other; *If you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me; if not, tell me*: As if he had said, by this, the truth of your love to my Master will be seen; so here, if ye will indeed deal kindly with God, tell his Embassadours so, by your complying with them in that which he so affectionately desires: This the Lord Jesus when on Earth, call'd *his Fathers business,* which must be done whatever comes on it: *Luke* 2. 49. *Wist ye not that I must be about my Fathers business?* He knew he had never come hither, but for the dispatch of this, and could not look his Father on the face when he went back, except this

was

was finish'd; therefore as this sped, and the work of the Gospel made progress, or met with any stop in the hearts of men, he mourn'd or rejoyc't; when it was rejected, we find him *griev-ed for the hardness of their hearts*, Mark 3. 5. When his Disciples make report how victoriously the Chariot of the Gospel ran, *In that hour* (it is said) *he rejoyced in Spirit*, Luk. 10. 21. When he was taking his leave of the World, his thoughts are at work how the Gospel should be carried on, and the salvation of souls suffer no prejudice by his departure, he therefore impowers his *Apostles* for the work; *All power is given me, Go preach the Gospel to all Nations.* Yea, now in Heaven, he is waiting for the success of it, and listning how his servants speed in their Errand. Now what a prodigious sin is it, by thy impenitency to withstand God in his main design? Do you indeed deal kindly with our Master, whose Embassy we bring?

Sect. 3.

4. *Fourthly*, Consider the weight and importance of the Message these Embassadours bring unto you, it is not a slight, sleevless Errand we come about. *We set before you this day life and good, death, and evil*, Deutr. 30. 15. *Hear, and your souls shall live*, Isa. 55. *He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him*, John 3. 36. We come not to entice you with the favour of an earthly Prince, who may promise Honours to day, and lose his own Crown to morrow. We bait not our hook with the Worlds Treasures or Pleasures, but bring you News of a Heaven that shall as surely be yours, as you are now on Earth, if you accept of the offer. We scare you not with the displeasure of a mortal man, whose breath is in his Nostrils, not with the momentary torment of Rack or Gibbet, which continue hardly long enough to be felt; but with the never dying wrath of the ever living God, and what we either promise or threaten in Gods Name, he stands ready and resolv'd to perform: *Isa.* 44. 26. *He confirmeth the word of his servants, and performeth the counsel of his Messengers.*

5. *Fifthly*, Consider on what Terms the Gospel and its Messengers stay among you; there is a time when God calls his Embassadors home,

home, and will Treat no longer with a People, and that must needs be a sad day! for when they go, then Judgments and Plagues come; if the Treaty ends, it will not be long before the War begins. *Elisha dyed, and the Bands of the Moabites invaded the Land*, 2 Kings 13. 20. The Prophet once gone, then the Enemy comes: The *Angel* plucks *Lot* out of *Sodom*, and how long had they fair weather after? The *Jewes* put away the Gospel from them by their impenitency, which made the *Apostles turn to the Gentiles*, Acts 13. 46. But did they not thereby call for their own Ruine and Destruction, which presently came flying on the *Roman Eagles* wings to them; they judg'd themselves unworthy of Eternal life, and God thought them unworthy also to have a Temporal; if once God calls home his Embassadours, it is no easie matter to bring them back, and get the Treaty (now broke up) set on foot again. God can least endure upon trial made of him, to be slighted in that which he makes account is one of the highest wayes he can express his favour to a People, better no Embassadours had come, than to come and go *Re infecta*, without effecting what they came for: *They shall know* (saith God) *they had a Prophet among them*, Ezek. 2. 5. That is, they shall know it to their cost, God will be paid for his Ministers pains. Now Ministers dye, or are remov'd from their People, and glad they are to be so rid of them; but they have not done with them, till they have reckon'd with God for them.

Secondly, To the Ministers of the Gospel; you see Brethren your Calling, let it be your care to comport with this your honourable Employment. 2.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

How Ministers should do the Duty of Embassadours.

1. STain not the Dignity of your Office by any base unworthy practises: *Dignitas in indigno* (saith *Salvian*) is *Ornamentum in Luto.* O lay not the Dignity of your Function in the Dirt by any foredid unholy Actions: *Paul* magnified his Office; do not you do that which should make others vilifie and debase it; that which makes others bad, will make you worse, *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Divel?* John 6. 70. You are call'd Angels, but if wicked, you become Divels: We read of *a Prophets Reward*, Matth. 10.41. which amounts to more than a private Disciples; and do you not think there will be a Prophets punishment in Hell, as well as Reward in Heaven? One saith, if any were born without Original sin, it should be the Minister; if any could live without actual sin, it should be the Minister; if there were such a thing as a venial sin, it should not be in Ministers; they are more the servants of God than others, should not they then be more holy than others? Art thou fit to be an Embassadour, who art not a good Subject? to be a Minister, that art not a good Christian?

2. *Secondly*, Keep close to thy Instructions: Ambassadours are bound up by their Commission what they are to say; be sure therefore to take thy Errand right, before thou ascendest the Pulpit to deliver it. *I have received of the Lord, that which I delivered to you* (saith *Paul*) 1 *Cor.* 11.17. *God* bids the *Prophet*, Ezek. 3.17. *Hear the Word at my mouth, and give them warning from me*: It must be from him, or it is not right. O take

take heed thou dost not set the Royal stamp upon thy own base metal: Come not to the People with *thus saith the Lord*; when 'tis the divination of thy own brain. No such loud lie, as that which is told in the Pulpit; and as thou must not speak what he never gave thee in Commission, so not conceal what thou hast in command to deliver; it is as dangerous to blot out, as put in any thing to our Message. *Job* comforted himself with this, That *he had not conceal'd the words of the Holy One*, Job 6. And *Paul* from this washeth his hands of the blood of souls: *Acts* 20. 26, 27. *I am pure from the blood of all men; I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.* Pray observe, He doth not say he had declar'd all the counsel of God; no, who can but God himself? The same *Apostle* saith, *We prophesie but in part.* There is a *Terra incognita* in the Scriptures, Mysteries that yet were never fully discover'd; we cannot declare all, that know not all: But he saith, *He shun'd not to declare all.* When he met a Truth, he did not step back to shun it; as when we see a man in the street, with whom we have no mind to speak, we step into some house or shop till he be past. The holy *Apostle* was not afraid to speak what he knew to be the mind of God; as he had it from God, so should they from him; he did not balk in his preaching what was profitable for them to know. *Caleb* (one of the Spies sent to *Canaan*) could not give them a full account of every particular place in the Land, but he made the best observation he could, and then brings *Moses* word again, *As it was* (saith he) *in my heart*, Josh. 14. 7. While others basely conceal'd what they knew, because they had no mind to the Journey; and this gain'd him the Testimony from Gods own mouth, to be a man *that follow'd him fully*, Numb. 14. 23. So he that doth his utmost to search the Scriptures, and then brings word to the People, as it is in his heart, preaching what he hath learnt from of it, without garbling his conscience, and detaining what he knows for fear or favour, this is the man that fulfills his Ministry, and shall have the *Euge* of a faithful servant.

Thirdly, Think it not enough that thou deliver'st thy Message from God, but shew a zeal for thy Master, whose Cause thou negotiatest. Should an Ambassadour after Audience had, and his Errand coldly done, then give himself up to the pleasures of the Court where he is resident, and not much mind or care what an-

swer he hath, nor how his Masters business speeds; surely he could not say he had done the Duty of a faithful Embassadour? No, his head and heart must be both at work how he may put life into the business, and bring it soonest to the desired issue. *Abrahams* servant would neither eat nor drink, till he saw which way his motion would work, and how they would deal with his Master: Thus should Ministers, let those they are sent to, see they are in earnest, that their hearts are deeply engag'd in their Embassy: When their People shew respect to their persons, though they are thankfully to resent this Civility, yet they are to let them know, this is not it they come for, or can be content with; but that they would deal kindly with their Master, whose Message they bring, and send them back to him with the joyful News of their Repentance, and acceptation of Christ; they should passionately endeavour their salvation, one while trying to dissolve them with the soft entreaties of love, another while beleaguring them with threatnings, that if they will to Hell, they may carry this witness with them, that their destruction is of themselves, and comes not on them for want of your care and compassion to their souls: It is not enough you are Orthodox Preachers, and deliver Truth, it is zeal God calls for at your hands. He so strongly himself desires the salvation of poor sinners, that he disdains you (whom he sends to impart it to them) should coldly deliver it, without shewing your good will to the thing. Christ, when he sends his servants to invite Guests to his Gospel-supper, bids them, *Compel them to come in*, Luk. 14. 23. But how? surely not as the *Spaniards* did the *Indians*, who drove them to be baptized, as we drive Cattel to watering, with staves and stones; we are not to pelt them in with outward violence and cruelty practised upon their bodies; but a spiritual force of Argument, subduing their hearts in our powerful preaching: *Peremit ut faciat voluntarios, non salvet invitos*; Bern. When God smites the consciences of men with the terrours of his threatnings, it is to make them willing, not to save them against their wills.

4. *Fourthly*, Let not any person or thing in the World bribe or scare thee from a faithful discharge of thy Trust: *Embassadours* must not be Pensioners to a Forraign *Prince*. He is unworthy to serve a Prince in so honourable an Employment, that dares not trust his Master to defend and reward him; such a one will not

long

long be faithful to his Trust: Nor will he in the Ministry, that rests not contented with Gods promise for his protection or reward: O how soon will he for fear or favour seek to save his stake, or mend it, though it be by falsifying his trust to God himself? *Blessed Paul* was far from this baseness, and hath set a noble pattern to all that shall be Gods Embassadours to the end of the World. 1 *Thes.* 2. 3. *As we are allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which tryeth our hearts; for neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know; nor a Cloak of Covetousness, God is our Witness.*

Fifthly, Be kind to, and tenderly careful of thy Fellow-Subjects; were it not strange, if an Embassadour sent from hence to *Turkey* or *Spain*, instead of protecting and encouraging the *English* Merchants there in their Trade, should hinder their Traffick, and employ all the power of his place to their prejudice and damage? surely his Prince sent him not to be an Enemy, but a Friend and Patron to his good Subjects there. The Minister as Gods Embassadour, is to encourage the Saints in their heavenly Trade, to assist them by his counsel, and protect them from the scorn that their wicked Neighbours cast upon them for their goodness. O how sad is it, if he shall bend his Ministry against them? if he shall weaken their hands, and strengthen the hands of the ungodly, in or out the Pulpit, by his preaching or practice; better he were with a Milstone tyed about his Neck, thrown into the Sea, than thus to offend these little ones. *Moses*, he smote the *Egyptian*, but rescu'd the *Israelite*; what account will they make to God of their Embassy, who in the very Pulpit smite the *Israelite* with their tongues, twitting them for their purity, and stroak the *Egyptian*, the profane and wicked, I mean, in their Congregations, whereby they bless themselves, as going to Heaven, when God knows their feet stand in the wayes that will undoubtedly lead them to Hell. 5.

CHAP. XV.

Five several Notes shortly touch't upon, from Pauls *being in Bonds.*

2. THE second Argument with which he stirs them up to his remembrance in their prayers, is, his present afflicted state; *for which I am an Embassadour in Bonds.* In the Greek, ἐν ἁλύσει, in a Chain. When we hear of an Embassador, and a Chain, we might at first expect it to be a Chain of Gold about his Neck, and not a Chain of Iron about his Leg or Arm; yet it is the latter here is meant. *Paul* was now a Prisoner at *Rome*, but in *liberâ custodiâ*, as is thought by *Interpreters* from this passage *in a Chain*, not in Chains; it being usual there for a Prisoner to be committed to the custody of some Souldier, with whom he might walk abroad, having a Chain on his right Arm, which was tyed to his Keepers left Arm; such a Prisoner (it is conceived) this holy man was now: *Paul* the Lamb, was Prisoner to *Nero* the Lyon; and therefore both needed and desired the *Churches* prayers for him; many are the Observables which this short passage might afford; I shall lightly touch them, but not enlarge upon them.

SECT.

SECT. I.

First, OBserve the usage which this blessed *Apostle* finds from an ungrateful World; a Chain is clap't upon him, as if he were some Rogue or Thief: He preacheth liberty to poor sinners, and is depriv'd of his own for his pains; he proclaims deliverance to the Captives, and is used like a slave for his labour. One would wonder what they could find against so holy and innocent a person to accuse him for, who made it his dayly exercise to live without offence to God and man, yet see what an inditement *Tertullus* preferres against him, *Acts* 24. as if there had not been such a Pestilent fellow in the whole Countrey as he: And *Paul* himself tells us *he suffered trouble as an evil doer, even to bonds*, 2 Tim. 2. 9. Many grievous things were laid to his charge. I.

Whence note,

That the best of men may and oft do suffer under the notion of vile and wicked persons. Let the Saints enemies alone to black their persons and cause. Christ himself must *be numbred among transgressors*, and no less than blasphemy be laid to his charge. Persecutors think it not enough to be cruel, but they would be thought just while they are cruel. *James* 5. 6. *Ye have condemned and killed the just.* Here is a bloody murther committed with all the formalities of justice. They condemn first, and then kill. And truly murder on the Bench is worse in Gods account, than that which is perpetrated by a Villain on the high-way. Well, there is a time when *Pauls* Cause, and the rest of suffering Saints, shall have a surer hearing than here they could meet with, and then it will appear with another complexion, than when drawn with their enemies black Coal. The names of the Godly shall have a Resurrection as well as their bodies. Now they are buried with their faces downward, their innocency and sincerity charg'd with many false imputations, but then all shall be set right. And well may the Saints stay to be cleared as long as God himself stayes *Note* 1.

to

to vindicate his own government of the world from the hard ſpeeches of ungodly ones.

SECT. 2.

Note 2. *Secondly*, OBſerve the true cauſe of *Pauls* ſufferings: It was his zeal for God and his Truth; *For which I am in bonds.* That is, for the Goſpel which I profeſs and preach. As that *Martyr*, who being askt how he came into Priſon, ſhew'd his *Bible*, and ſaid, *This brought me hither.* Perſecutors may pretend what they will, but it is their Religion and Piety that their ſpite is at. *Paul* was an honeſt man in the opinion of his Countreymen ſo long as he was of their opinion, went their way, and did as they did; but when he declared himſelf to be a Chriſtian, and preacht his Goſpel up, then they cryed him down as faſt; then his old friends turn'd new enemies, and all their fiſts were about his ears. The wicked are but the Devils ſlaves, and muſt do as he will have them. Now it is Truth and Godlineſs that pulls down his Kingdom; when therefore theſe appear in the Saints lives, then he calls forth the wicked world, as a Prince would do his Subjects into the field to fight for him: So that it is impoſſible to get to heaven without blows, *He that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer perſecution.* That is, one way or other; and none more than the Preacher. He puts his hand into the Waſps neſt, and therefore muſt expect to be ſtung. He treads on the Serpents head, and it were ſtrange if he ſhould not turn again to bite him. But let not this trouble you. Fear not what you can ſuffer, only be careful for what you ſuffer. Chriſts Croſs is made of ſweet wood; there are comforts peculiar to thoſe that ſuffer for righteouſneſs. When *Sabina* a Chriſtian Martyr, fell in travel in the Priſon, and was heard to cry and make a dolour in thoſe her childbearing throws; ſome askt her, how ſhe would endure the torments which her perſecutors prepared for her, if ſhe ſhrunk at thoſe? *O* (ſaith ſhe) *now I ſuffer for ſin, then I ſhall ſuffer for Chriſt.*

SECT.

SECT. 3.

Thirdly, OBſerve how cloſe *Paul* ſticks to the Truth: He will not part with it, though it brings him into trouble; he had rather the Perſecutor ſhould impriſon him for preaching the Goſpel, than he impriſon it by a cowardly ſilence. He hath caſt up his accounts, and is reſolved to ſtand to his profeſſion whatever it may coſt him. The truth is, That Religion is not worth embracing, that cannot bear ones charges in ſuffering for it; and none but the Chriſtians is able to do this. Neither is he worth the name of a Chriſtian, that dares not take Chriſts Bill of Exchange to receive in heaven, what he is out in ſuffering for his ſake on earth. And yet alas, how hard is it to get faith enough to do this? 'Tis eaſier to bow at the Name, than to ſtoop to the Croſs of Jeſus. Many like Religion for a Summer-houſe, when all is fair and warm abroad in the world, but when Winter comes, doors are ſhut up, and no body to be ſeen in or about it. *Note 3.*

SECT. 4.

Fourthly, OBſerve the publication *Paul* makes of his ſufferings to the *Church*: He being now a Priſoner, ſends his diſpatches to this and other Churches, to let them know his condition.

From whence, Note firſt,

Firſt, That ſufferings for the Goſpel are no matter of ſhame. *Paul* doth not bluſh to tell it is for the Goſpel he is in bonds. The ſhame belong'd to them that clapt on the Chain, not to him that wore it. The Thief, the Murderer may juſtly bluſh to tell wherefore they ſuffer, not the Chriſtian for well-doing, 2 *Pet.* 4. 16. *If any man ſuffer as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed, but glorifie God on this behalf.* Chriſt himſelf counted it no diſhonour to have the *Note 4.*

print.

print of his wounds seen after his Resurrection. *Babylas* a Christian Martyr, would have his Chaines buried with him. *The Apostles rejoyced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name*, Act. 5. 41. And if it be no shame to suffer for the Gospel, then surely it is none to professe it, and live up to its holy Rules; Shall the wicked glory in their shame, and thou be shamed of thy glory? Shall they do the Devils work at Noon-day-light, and thou afraid to be seen to be good? Yet *Salvian* tells us in his days (so wicked they were, and such a scorn was cast upon holiness) that many carry'd Christs colours in their Pocket, and concealed their Piety, *ne viles haberentur*, lest they should be counted vile and base.

Sect. 5.

Note 5. *Fifthly, and lastly,* OBserve the end why he makes known his sufferings.

First, That they may know the true cause wherefore he suffer'd. *Pauls* enemies laid heavy things to his charge, and these might haply fly as far as *Ephesus*. When the Saints are in a suffering condition, Satan is very industrious to defame them, and mis-represent the cause of their troubles to the world, as if it were for no good. Now, though *Paul* regarded little what the wicked world said of him, yet he desired to stand right in the thoughts of the *Churches*, and therefore acquaints them with the cause of his imprisonment.

Secondly, To strengthen their faith, and comfort their hearts: No doubt but *Pauls* Chain entred into their souls, and his suffering was their sorrow. This he knew, and therefore sends them word by *Tychicus* (the Bearer of this Epistle) how it fared with him in his bonds, that they might not spend too many tears for him, who had a heart so merry and cheerful in his sufferings, *Verse* 22. *That ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.* Thus have we seen sometimes a tender-hearted father on his sick bed, not so much troubled with his own pains, or thoughts of his approaching death, as to see his Children

Children take them ſo much to heart, and therefore forgetting his own miſeries, addreſſeth himſelf with a ſmiling countenance to comfort them. O 'tis an excellent ſight to behold the Saints that are at liberty mourning over their afflicted brethren, and thoſe that are the ſufferers, become comforters to them that are at liberty. Never doth Religion appear more glorious, than when they commend it who are ſuffering for it: And no way can they commend it higher, than by a holy humble cheerfulneſs of ſpirit in their ſufferings. The comfortable Letters which the *Martyrs* in Queen *Maries* dayes ſent out of Priſon, did wonderfully ſtrengthen their brethren throughout the Kingdom, and fit them for the Priſon. Sufferers preach with great advantage above others. They do not ſpeak by hear-ſay, but what they experiment in themſelves.

Thirdly, To engage their prayers for him. Suffering Saints have ever been very covetous of Prayers. *Paul* ſets all the Churches at work for him. *Pray, pray, pray*, was the uſual cloſe to Mr. *Bradfords* Letters out of Priſon: And great reaſon for it; for a ſuffering condition is full of temptations. When Man playes the Perſecutour, the Devil forgets not to be a Tempter. He that followed Chriſt into the Wilderneſſe, will finde a way to get to his Saints in the Priſon. Sometimes he will try whether he can ſoften them for impreſſions of fear, or make them pity themſelves; and he ſhall not want them, that will lend their tears to melt their Courage, and weaken their Reſolution: May be Wife and Children, or Friends and Neighbours, who wiſh them well, but are abuſed by Satan to lay a ſnare before them, while they expreſſe their affection to them. No doubt thoſe good People meant well to *Paul*, who with tears and paſſionate entreaties endeavour'd to keep him from *Jeruſalem*, (where it was foretold he ſhould come into trouble) but Satan had a Deſigne againſt *Paul* therein, who hoped they might not only break his heart, but weaken his Courage, with their tears. When he cannot make a Coward of the Saint, to runne from the Croſſe, then hee'l try to ſoure and ſwell his ſpirit with ſome ſe-

cret anger against those that lay'd it on. O 'tis no easie matter to receive Evil, and wish none to him from whose hands we have it. To reserve love for him that shews wrath and hatred to us, is a glorious, but a difficult work. If he cannot leven him with wrath against his Persecutour, then he will try to blow him up with a high conceit of himself, who dares suffer for Christ, while others shrink in their heads, and seek to keep themselves safe within their own Shell. O this Pride is a *Salamander*, that can live in the Fire of Suffering! If any one Saint needs the humility of many Saints, it is he that is called to Suffer: To glory in his Sufferings for Christ, becomes him well; 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. *Galatians* 6. 14. But to glory in himself for them, is hateful and odious. Needs not he a quick eye, and a steady hand, that is to drive his Chariot on the brow of so dangerous a Precipice?

In a word, As a suffering condition is full of temptations, so the Saints strength to carry him safely thorow them is not in his own keeping. God must help, or the stoutest Champions spirit will soon quail: *In all things I am instructed; both to be full and to be hungry; both to abound and to suffer need*, Philippians 4. 12. This was a hard Lesson indeed to learn: Who was his Master? See, *Verse* 13. *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.* Now as the Saints strength to suffer is not in themselves, but Christ: so prayer is the best meanes to fetch it in for their help; for by it they confesse their own weakness, and so God is secured from having a Corrival in the Praise; which *Paul* is here free to do, and more than so: For as he confesseth he can do nothing without Christs strength to enable and embolden him, so he dares not relie on his own solitary single prayers for the obtaining it, but calls in the Auxiliary Forces of his Fellow Saints to besiege Heaven for him. That while he is in the Valley, suffering for the Gospel, they may be lifting up their hands and hearts in the Mount of Prayer for him.

FINIS.

AN

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